PLAYSTATION® MAGAZINE

PS2®

PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

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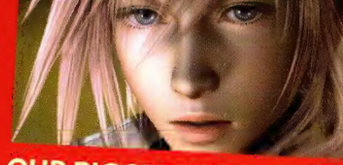

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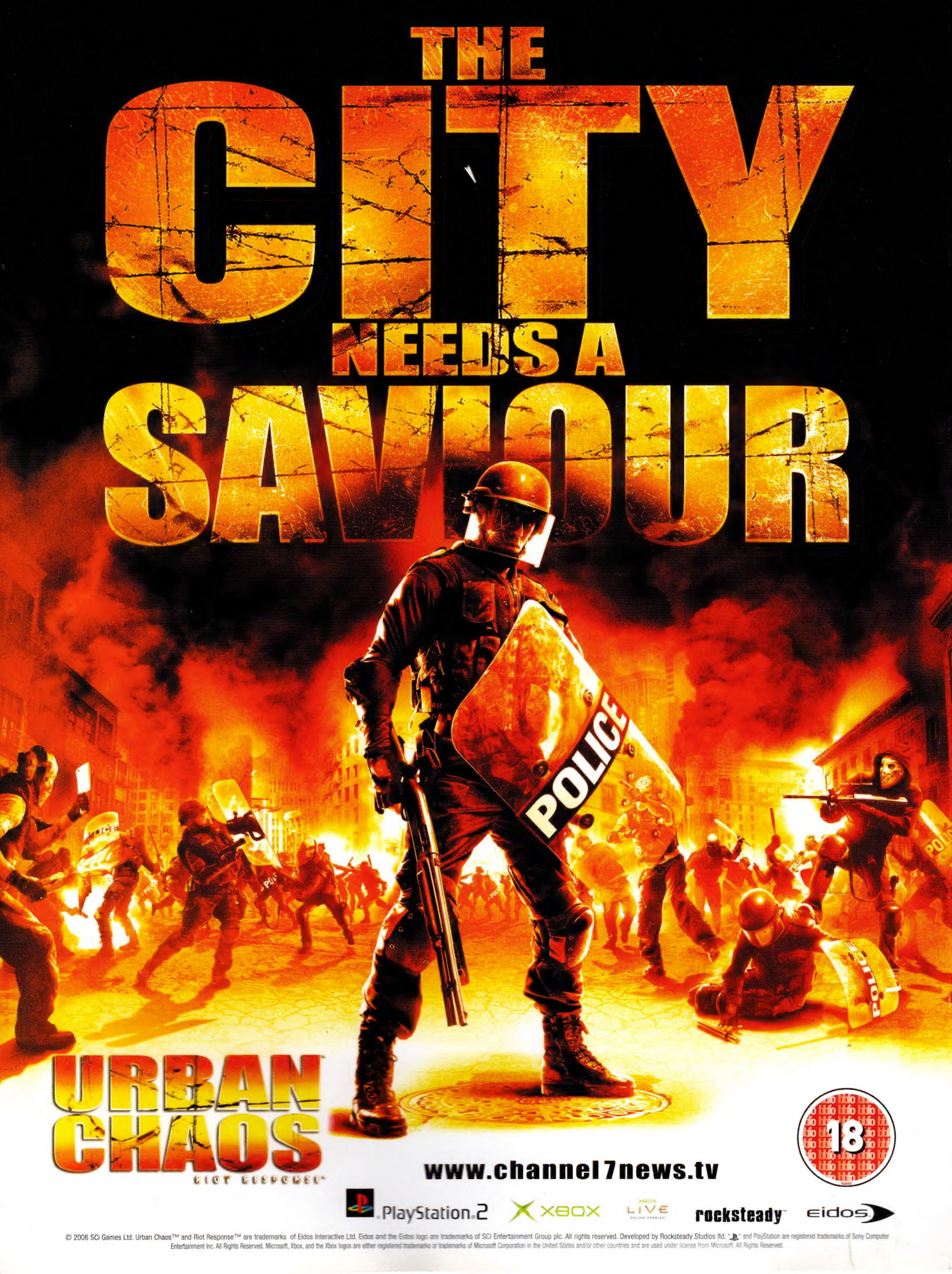

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LOCOROCO
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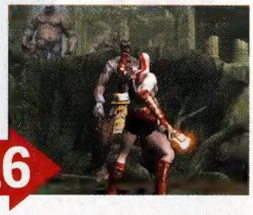

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PLAYING PLAYSTATION 2, LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

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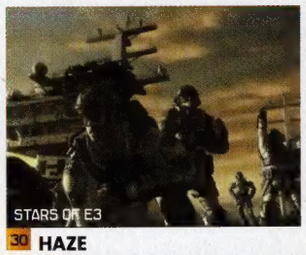
MEET THE FINISHED PS3

★ The specs! The launch! The pad! The (rather high) price! Get *all* the gen now.



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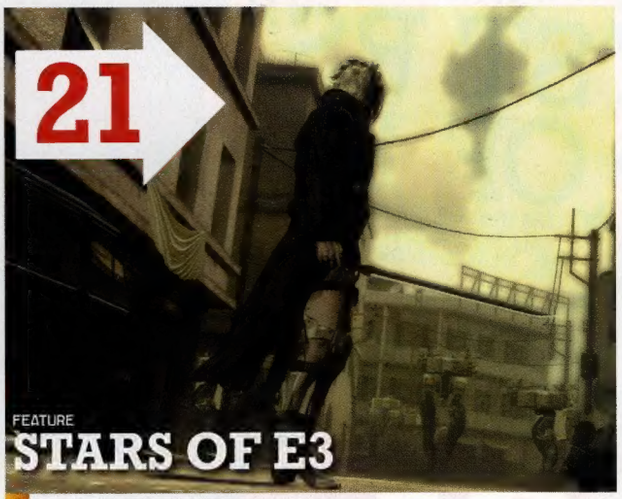

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PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

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THE E3 SHOW IS OVER AND THE FINISHED PS3 IS HERE. THINGS COULDN'T BE BETTER. COULD THEY?

This is the most important issue of the year. More important than Christmas. More important than the summer issue you read on the beach. This is the big one: AKA the one with all the games, excitement and upset from the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles. Every year we go. And ever year we turn what happened into the best 'E3' feature you can buy. We hope you enjoy it this year as much as ever – and we've put an extra 32 pages into the magazine just to make possible all we wanted to say. Phew.

And this E3 show was more important than most. Last year (May 10th, 2005 to be exact) Sony showed off PS3 for the first time. We saw the logo, the design of the machine and a cavalcade of great game demos – most notorious of which was that *Killzone* footage. Was it real, was it made up CG footage? The answer would be revealled this year... Only it wasn't. No sign of *Killzone* at all in fact. Odd. Instead we get a load of new games (yay). *Gran Turismo HD* for example. And *Genji 2*. And *Formula 1*. And *NBA 2007*. And... Hold on a minute. What's going on?

And it gets more interesting. Two PS3's? Two specs? Two price tags? After the pre-E3 Sony conference (May 8th, 2006) we staggered out into the bright sunshine a little confused and – dare we say it – a little disappointed. We're witnessing PS3's first stumbling steps. It's first real games. And the grim reality that all that power doesn't come cheap.

We think you'll understand what the future holds for PlayStation 3 once you read this magazine. We've got the best conference report (see page 12) and we've hand-picked the games worth knowing about in a huge 'Stars of E3' feature (starting on page 21). We explain the new hardware – the surprises, the changes and what it all means to you – on page 56. And we wind down with our famous annual 'E3: Uncut' report (on page 62). We guarantee it's the only place that truly captures the madness of the biggest games show in the world.

In this magazine you'll find great news. There are plenty of surprises. And there are some disappointments. And the future... The future is proving to be packed with promise we can only imagine. Start here. **The PSM2 Team**

PSM2

MAGAZINE PROMISE...

PSM2 is 100% independent. We write what we want, when we want. We don't ridicule popular opinion for the sake of controversy. Or generate hype without fact. Well, not *often*. We're not afraid to admit to our mistakes. And we're always first to put things right. We say it as we see it. Fact.

- Here at PSM2 we play every game we preview – that means genuine hands-on opinion, not what we've read about on the net.
- We're gamers just like you – and that's means we go into the kind of detail you demand. Check our sidebars for the latest facts and stats or screenshots that show off all the newest features.
- PSM2 is 100% editorially independent! You won't read the same quality of hard-hitting, informed, accurate – and, crucially, passionate – reviews anywhere else. And we can review games and reveal hardware other mags have to keep secret.
- We feature more screenshots than any other magazine.

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PS2 ON THE DVD

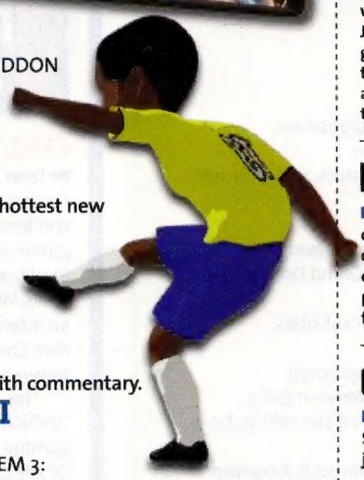
WHAT'S ON THE DVD

LATEST

Just in! The very latest gaming vids

GOD OF WAR 2

- OKAMI
- WINNING ELEVEN 10
- X-MEN 3
- MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON
- SPY HUNTER
- BLACK BUCCANEER



HANDS ON

Exclusive footage from all the hottest new games.

SENSIBLE SOCCER

- FORBIDDEN SIREN 2

REVIEWS

Reviews for new PS2 games with commentary.

FINAL FANTASY XII

- ROGUE TROOPER
- TURTLES 3: MUTANT MAYHEM 3:
- STATE OF EMERGENCY 2
- CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006
- FIFA WORLD CUP 2006
- GHOST RECON: AW
- TOURIST TROPHY

EXTRAS

Stuff that doesn't fit anywhere else...

- GDC TECH DEMO SHOWREEL
- SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS HIDDEN SECRETS
- DRAGON QUEST SECRETS
- TOMB RAIDER SECRET COSTUMES

PS3

The newest PS3 movies around.

BATTLEFIELD 2142

- DEAD RISING
- CELL FACTOR
- VIRTUA FIGHTER 5
- HALF-LIFE 2
- THE DARKNESS
- LOST PLANET

PSP

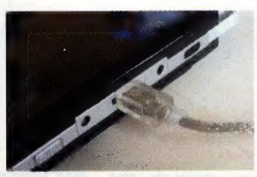
The latest footage from the best new PSP games.

HARVEST MOON

- POWERSTONE COLLECTION
- VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE
- MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM

ESSENTIAL PSP 2

Our disc is laden with game saves, wallpapers and other goodies to get the most out of your PSP. To access the files, put your regular PSM2 DVD into your computer's DVD drive and open it to view its contents. There are two folders called 'AUDIO_TS' and 'VIDEO_TS', but ignore these – they're to do with our DVD videos. The folder you're looking for is helpfully labelled 'Essential PSP'. In here you'll find everything you need. See below for instructions – and enjoy!



FIRST, GET YOUR PSP HOOKED UP

■ Attach your USB wire between your home computer and PSP. Stick the disc into your computer. Now enable USB connection by going to 'Settings' and selecting 'USB Connection'. Your PSP will now appear as an extra hard drive either in 'My Computer' on PC or on the desktop with a Mac. Double click to open it and you'll now be inside PSP's memory stick. You'll see folders inside called 'Photos' etc. IMPORTANT: You should always remember to 'Eject the device' from you PSP before disconnecting the PSP.

WALLPAPERS

■ You'll find 50 (yes 50!) amazing gaming wallpapers to brighten up your PSP background. Just click through a selection of our favourite game images, choose one and drag it across to the 'Photos' folder. On your PSP view the image and then select 'Set as wallpaper' to lay it out on the backdrop. Simple.

PSM2 REVIEWS TO GO

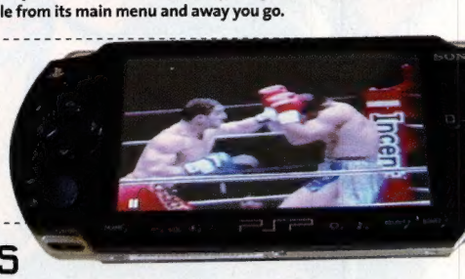
■ This is your ultimate source of PS2 knowledge all condensed onto your PSP, which means you get all of our listings pages featured in this magazine to check out on the way to your local games shop. To put them on your PSP select 'PSM2 Reviews To Go' from the disc and copy both files into the 'Photos' folder. One contains all our PS2 scores and the other our PSP ones. Now open the 'Photos' folder and open whichever listings you want to take a look at. You may need to change your view to Zoom (press △) to pop the image out to full screen. Now use the stick to scroll up and down.

GAME SAVES

■ Use these 37 saves to complete your PSP games more quickly. Some contain completely unlocked content and others are saved just before final bosses – to let you feel as though you've achieved something. Simply copy across your chosen game save into your 'Savedata' folder, fire up the game then load the save file from its main menu and away you go.

PSP MOVIES

■ We've got ten movies handily converted in MP4 format ready for you to view on PSP. And all you have to do is open the 'Movies' folder on the disc. Now create a folder called MP_ROOT next to PSP folder (not inside it). Next create a sub-folder inside called 100MNV01. Now copy the movies from the disc into this folder. Disconnect and they're ready.



HOW TO USE PSP VIDEO EXPRESS

You can drag and drop this software onto your computer then convert DVD files and other movie formats into MP4s. You can then watch them on the move via PSP. Open up the disc, select either the PC or Mac folder and drop your choice of software onto your desktop. Install it (double-click on it) and once it's finished follow these instructions to get going.

HOW TO USE PSP VIDEO 9

This program is fairly tricky to get started, but here are four handy steps to ease the process.

■ Start the program and click 'Convert' in the top-left hand corner. You're now at the conversion screen.

■ Press 'One Click Transcode' to open a browser window and select the type of file you want to convert, AVI, MOV, WMA, VOB, and the like. (Copy VOB files off your DVDs onto your PC.)

■ It's important to remember NOT to change the file names of the converted files because if you do, they won't be read by PSP. Weird, eh? But that's the way it is.

■ Then click 'Copy Video to PSP' and you're now ready to watch movies on the move.

HOW TO USE PSP WARE

This is simple to use but has less options to tweak video quality.

■ Connect your PSP to your computer and engage USB mode.

■ Open PSP Ware and click Movies then drag your video file into the big empty window. It'll then begin converting.

■ Tick the box of the completed file, press 'Sync' and it'll be sent to your PSP.

HOW TO USE PSP VIDEO EXPRESS

The full version (available through this demo) is capable of ripping straight from a DVD, but this demo can't.

■ Start the program and click 'Open' on the right-hand side of the screen.

■ Choose a file and it'll begin to play on screen. Click 'Record It'. Now click on 'PSP video transfer' on the top bar to go straight to the transfer screen.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "I NEVER FIND THAT BORING ONE BIT IT FANTASY..."

Letters

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PS2 UNIVERSE

► EMAIL: psm2@futurenet.co.uk – subject line 'Letters'

► WRITE TO: Letters, PSM2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

PSM2 WINNER!

Every issue, the writer of the Star Letter gets our eternal thanks... Oh, PLUS a red hot package of PS2 goodies fresh from the PSM2 booty chest. So entertain us and your fellow readers. Let the prattle commence!

GAMES AREN'T LIKE LIFE: "YOU EXPECT MUGGERS TO START TURN-BASED BATTLES"

► **Dear PSM2,**

You know you're an RPG fan when:

1. Your hair is dyed blue and fixed (with super-stick gel) in an awkward position.
2. You have a life sized poster of Yuna from *Final Fantasy* in your room.
3. When your careers adviser asks you would you'd like to be in the future, you reply with 'summoner', 'guardian', 'blitzball player' or 'chocobo breeder'.
4. You run instead of walking in fear of a random battle occuring.
5. Before diving off the high board into your pool, you think about 'saving your game'.
6. Every essay you write for school has a title such as, 'Miko's Grand Dragon Adventure' or 'The Staff Of Shadows XVII'.
7. You purposely watch your DVDs in Japanese with English subtitles.
8. You find *FF*'s Rikku charming and not annoying.
9. Haley Joel Osmont becomes your new favorite actor. (Yay! Sora!)
10. *X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse* looks better than *Resident Evil 4*.
11. On your Sunday afternoon trips to your gran, you ask her if she sells potions or rare weapons.
12. Your CD collection consists only of tunes from *Dark Chronicle, Kingdom Hearts* or any other RPG with dull-repetitive tunes.
13. You own every *Final Fantasy* – and have bought extra copies still in their plastic wrapping.
14. When you run into a mugger in a dark alley, you expect him to start a turn based battle with you, and then when he runs away with your wallet, you think he's going to get +5 agility points.

Arran Channell, email

No matter how big an RPG fan you are, there's no way *X-Men Legends: Rise Of Apocalypse* could ever be said to look better than *Resi 4*. Still, we're happy to see everyone embracing this new wave of quality RPGs. Let's just hope the new-found popularity of trawling round fairy-strewn landscapes doesn't see the arrival of a cavalcade of tedious 'me too' role-playing copycats, eh?

ONE MAN'S MEAT...

► **Dear PSM2,**

I originally wanted to write a letter to condemn Monte Cristo's *The Plan*, and games with similar rubbish implementations of other peoples ideas. Who would pay money for such an inferior game? Who?! But then Nick Overmars' hilarious letter answered that question for me.

Yes, he was the one that said "WORST game ever in the adventure gaming in the world" about *Shadow Of The Colossus*, for its lack of prostitutes and exploding barrels. *Colossus* is the perfect example of why games don't need the typical clichés; it does something fresh, and it does it well. When it comes to a choice between shooting through yet another tedious gritty urban environment or scaling the limbs of an awe-inspiring giant, I know which I'd choose every time.

Joe Cruickshank, email

Hey, Joe – guess who's back!

BEST REVIEWER EVER

► **Dear PSM2,**

Dragon Quest – I couldn't believe that this game is fantastic I know it cartoonist graphics bt the playability is brilliant, words cannot describe how I feel about this game there is no question ask. I love it. It quite amusing about the green monster which is the king it just made me laugh and also

GOIN' POSTAL

Oh, lordy, this box gets more and more difficult to fill every month. Really, what are we supposed to say here? These are all words that could be used to write great poetry, and instead they're being wasted on nothing blather. Criminal.

RAY OF SUNSHINE
I guess I'm sort of happy today.
Sharna Lowery, email
Ah, that's nice. We're glad you're happy.

Knowing our readers are happy makes us happy too. Yes.

DEED AND BURIED
Is there a Judge John

LEGENDARY? *Tomb Raider Legend* – great? Crap? What do you lot think?

SPEAK TO THE TEAM JUNE 16TH

CALL THE PSM2 HOTLINE!

01225 788157

YES, now YOU can SPEAK to PSM2! Call the Hotline and leave us a message at any time, day or night! Alternatively, call us LIVE between 2pm and 5pm on June 16th, when we'll be answering the phone in person! And it ain't no '60p per second' porno line either! Bargain!

"THE WORST GAME EVER IS... GUITAR HERO!"

there are so much to do in this game. I love the battle is brilliant it very easy to undertsnd how to play this game and tuturial. To be honest it slightly better than the *Fianl Fantasy 10*. The graphics is very clear and sharp. I never find that boring not one bit it fantasy I reckon it should be around 95% out of 100.

Nick Overmars, email

See? Ace! Nick's only taken a few words to say what it took us four pages to put across. This man has the skills for sure.

OUT TO LAUNCH

► Dear PSM2,

I'm glad you're so excited about PS3, but I must point out that launch games are invariably shit. If PS3 launches with another fireworks game and shiny versions of *Tekken* and *Ridge Racer* then, frankly, I'm not likely to buy one.

Andrew Duffy, Waterford

Study our massive E3 blowout a few pages on for all the latest, Duffo. We'd expect a bit more than just another shimmery version of *Ridge Racer* from PS3's launch line-up. Hopefully.

SPOUTING FORTH

► Dear PSM2,

Will somebody tell me why Dan G gets so much time on the reviews section of the DVD? Every time Andy or Dan D are saying something interesting or funny, Dan G interrupts. It's less a group discussion and more a forum for Dan G to air his opinions.

Andrew Duffy, Waterford

"I'm SUMMING UP!" cries a nose-disjointed Dan G. Hmm. Fact is if we didn't let him talk on the DVDs he'd make us attend his *Need for Speed* inspired poetry readings again.

BACK IN TIME

► Dear PSM2,

What was the first game you lot ever played? Mine was bloody *Crash Bandicoot!* I'm too young to remember playing the first *Resi* – but that's only cos I was about four when it came out. The first *Resi* I've ever played is *Resident Evil 4* (and even now I'm technically too young to play it) but that hasn't stopped me from completing it and the likes of *God Of War, Devil May Cry* and *San Andreas*. And Dan D said he had to take his jumper off to kill Ares when a 14 year old girl can beat him! Either he sucks ass or I completely rock.

Rebekah Curran, email

It's probably both. Our first games ever are: Andy – *Alex Kidd* on Master System. Nathan – *Frogger*. Dave – a truly dreadful *Breakout* clone called *Thro' The Wall* on Spectrum. Rich – something called *Sir Lancelot* on Amstrad. Dan D – *Horace Goes Skiing*. Yes, *that's* how old we all are. Pass the ass, Rebekah, you rock.

ARGUMENT CORNER

► Dear PSM2

Black is just a series of tech demos!

James Lovatt, Bournemouth

► Dear PSM2

You gave *Tomb Raider Legend* just 81% What the hell?

Christopher Tandy, Berkshire

► Dear PSM2

75% for *The Godfather!* Injustice! 98%! That's the real verdict.

Owen Nicholls, email

► Dear PSM2

The worst game ever is... *Guitar Hero!* Maybe it'd be OK if it'd had some 2pac in there. Rock sucks!

Paul McAllen, email

Well, although technically no opinion can ever be wrong, some – i.e. ours – are more right than others. And if an opinion *was* ever wrong, that last one certainly is. Still, he's in a minority...

ROCK ON

► Dear PSM2

Check out my guitar, nice and silver. *GUITAR HERO* ROCKS!

Steve Lewis, email

Yes, it does. Anyone else pimped their axe? Send us pics and we'll print the best ones.

AXE POWER: This is a cool guitar – but we reckon there are better out there... Show us.

Deed strategy game in the works? Fingers crossed!
Robert Stainforth, Birmingham
Maybe if we ALL CROSS OUR FINGERS. And pray HARD!

SPOTTED!
Did you guys know you're in *MGS3*?
Andrew Gallivan, email
Yep. There's a copy of our mag on a table. We're great, us.

FART AND CRAFT
Snake still looks cool even as an old fart.
Gareth Foers, email
Is there such a thing as a young fart? Write and tell us.

A BUM RAP
He should have a sexy ass like me.
Virgis Kaminis, Dublin
We were thinking the exact same thing.

AIN'T THAT GRANDMA?
I am a Grandmum, 63 years young.
Gillian Velga, email
You're only about half Dan G's age, then.

HARSH CRITICISM
Issue 74 was a complete shambles.
Andrew Murray, Belfast
Come on! Check that news section? Are you blind/mad?

SILLY BILLY
Later that evening, while watching the brilliant Billy Connolly on DVD...
Dan Pellatt, Fareham
Billy Connolly? We much prefer "the brilliant Jethro".

Letters

THE LOUDEST VOICES IN THE PS2 UNIVERSE

PSM2 ONLINE

Yes, you can now interact with us on that internet thingy. Head to www.myspace.com/PSM2 to join in the carnage.

Hey, guys. I just wanted to leave a comment to say how freakin' sweet *Guitar Hero* is! I've not stopped rocking since it came out (much to the chagrin of my fingers). I'm soooooo happy to hear they're making a sequel! 55 songs of magic! **GARY**

I agree with Gary. *Guitar Hero* rocks. I love it. After your review, I just had to have a go on it. I was playing in GAME the other day and making a fool of myself 'cos i was rocking out and head banging. I actually felt like a rock star. **THE RUTHLESS ROBBIE G**
***Guitar Hero* – the sensation that's sweeping the nation. Well, the part of the nation that's made up of frustrated, cack-handed wannabe rock stars like you lot, at least.**

I was going to write in but couldn't be bothered. But I thought I'd just say that *Path Of Neo* really let me down. Sigh. **JUST THE BEAST UNDER YOUR BED**
Well, we liked it. Come on, it's better than the other *Matrix* games, you've got to give it that.

Why does everyone cream over *FFVII*? I preferred *VIII* and *X* to *VII*... I could never get into *VII*, it was just 'meh'. Maybe I'll play the remake on PS3 and be swayed, though. **TEH PWNER**

P-S-M-2, How I love you, I want to love you all night long, That's why i wrote this corny song. **ANTO**
Erm, thanks. We think.

I so cant wait to see what Free Radical have planned for PS3. Even knowing its unlikely to be another *TimeSplitters* game, as long as they keep that amazing mapmaker then I'm happy no matter what. That mapmaker is brilliant! I just recently made a level and its impossible to complete. **KRIS**
Why would you ever want to do that?

I was just wondering whether you guys have had a chance to see Silent Hill yet? I saw it today and I was like, wow. It really captured the essence of the town, and the horror that goes with it, for the large part concentrating on the psychological terror and then introducing the real evil. I think it puts the Resident Evil films to shame. **ROB**
A movie in which nothing happened for two hours other than a mouse farting would quite easily put the Resident Evil films to shame. Yes, we quite likes the SH movie. Bit stupid though.

I have a rather interesting topic for next-gen consoles. Procedural Synthesis: How important is it really? **KRIS**
Yes, that's a 'really interesting' topic. Girls. Games. Cars. Boring...

What will next gen *Pro Evo* look and feel like? **SNAKE**
Like heaven in your hands, we've no doubt.

How is Milf? Is he still as annoying as ever? **SEAN**
Moreso.

INCOMING

Give your thumbs a break from your pads by texting us. Oh, that's thumbwork too, isn't it? Still, do it

PSM2 FFVII on PS3?? I think I need a change of underwear!!
Oh, so that's what that smell is.

PSM2 could you tell me when metal gear solid 3 subsistance is out in the uk and will we get the full box set? cheers for that
Mark June 30th in your diary for your online Snake-bashing needs. And yes, you'll get everything that came with the Japanese *Subsistence*.

PSM2 Is The Sims 2: Open For Business coming to PS2? If it is when is it out? Cheers people for the help. Bradley Hope.
Oh, probably not. And you know, we're really not fussed either way.

they'd be identical. But they're not, so they aren't. Clear on all of that?

PSM2 To sell more umd films the old ones should b 10 tops. £18 4 robocop?!
We're inclined to agree, although if any movie in the world is worth full price on UMD, surely it has to be the mighty Robocop?

PSM2 1)will unreal tournement 2007 on ps3 be a halo beater.2)if there was a fight between leon(resi4) and snake(mgs).
It might not be a *Halo* beater – though it *could* be – but it'll at least give it a run for its money. If there was a fight between Leon and Snake what? Finish what you start next time.

PSM2 Is it true that paramount are making a big screen movie of splinter cell
There's one in production, yes. It's directed by Peter Berg, who made the excellent Very Bad Things.

PSM2 WILL GUN STAR HEROES BE OUT ON PSP AND PS2? IF SO WILL IT BE EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE OLD CLASSIC?
Not so far as we know, no. Although if they were coming,

PSM2 hi guys i have seen a game 4 the psp in the shops called Gottlieb pinball classics just wonderd how come u havent reviewed it yet dave aka Everlast.
Ah, well, jet on over to page 112 to sate your handheld pinball reviewing thirst. You're not Everlast the rapper, are you?

HOW 2 TEXT PSM2

Yes! Now you can text your questions and letters to PSM2. No more fiddling with 'paper' and 'pens'. When you want answers, our mobile portal is wide open and waiting. Here's how you do it.

DO THIS NOW! WE'RE WAITING!

It really couldn't be simpler. In the words of Marvin Gaye let's get some 'textual healing'... Or something. We've set up not one, but three different lines upon which to reach us. Look.

TEXT THE TEAM!

First up we want you to ask us a question. Anything! We'll feature your questions and answers in the mag and – we swear by almighty Lorne Lanning himself – that we'll do our best to text you back a reply as soon as poss. The best bit? You only pay for the text once we reply. (Answers to your PlayStation questions will cost you 25p plus your normal TXTing charge).
Start your text PSM2 then a space, then your question. Text the lot to 87103. God willing we'll reply.

MAKE US LAUGH!

Taken a photo of anything decent recently? Fancy sharing it with the readership of PSM2? We want to see your pictures. Best picture each month wins a booty of games. Pics cost 50p, plus your usual TXTing charge. Just try and keep them vaguely game related eh? No violence or porn thanks. Second thoughts... if you have any hot certified-over-18 female friends or relations that we can hook Andy up with... Or men, come to think of it.
Start your text PSM2PICS then a space, then your message. Enclose you pic and text the lot to 07921 889345. Best pic wins lunatic booty.

VOTE FOR GAMES!

What games do you want to see in PSM2? Which are you most looking forward to? Text us and we'll compile your Most Wanted chart each month. What's more, one entry each month will win the game they vote for. Texts cost 25p plus your usual TXTing charge.
Start your text PSM2VOTE then a space, then the name of the game you want to 87103. Be lucky!

YOUR PLAYSTATION 3 QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

WITH RON KUTARAGI
(the less famous, younger brother of President and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, Ken Kutaragi).

FULL COLOUR

► Dear PSM2,
Will PS3 be available in different colours?
Akmol Hussein, email
"Hi, Akmol! If it was up to me, PS3 would be bright pink, like a big Hubba-Bubba piece, but Ken said pink was for girls so I must be a big girl. But I'm not! I just think pink things are pretty! Anyway It doesn't look like there's going to be lots of different colours to choose from – there've been silver, white and black PS3's shown, but even then it looks like only black will be available to buy from day one. Ken painted his room black the other day. It looks horrible. My room is pink."

IN CONTROL

► Dear PSM2,
I've heard that PS3 will be twice as powerful as Xbox 360, but does this mean it will have better graphics? Also, I want to know why people hate PS3's controllers? All you dull readers out there who moan about them should shut up.
Jack Cotterill, Warrington
"Yeah, Jack! I agree with you! They *should* shut up! Anyway, as you'll see in our E3 spectacular, the controllers are no longer like a ladies' plaything, and feature an ace motion-sensor device – see page 23 onwards for more. I asked Ken if they might come in pink and he told me to "shut my fat mouth". But I know he loves me really. Oh, and yes, PS3 will have better graphics than Xbox 360, definitely. Maybe some of them will be pink!"

GAMES GALORE

► Dear PSM2,
There's so much crap on PS2 now. We dont want to play age old games in the year 2006, (*Rampage*, I'm looking at you), and these retro collections make me want to piss myself with rage. And then there's *Sonic*, *Pro Evo Management* and so on taking up the average end of the pool. My point is PS3 CAN'T be like this. Practically all of the recently announced games look fantastic, but when PS3 starts to age a bit, lets pray our futuristic shelves won't be graced with the likes of (shudder...) *Jet Ion GP 2* and *Smarties Meltdown Remix*. So developers, let's see more of classics like *God Of War* and *Shadow Of The Colossus*, 'cos we frickin' love 'em!
Hayley Yoxall, email
"Oh, gosh. A girl. A real one. I've never spoken to a girl before, Hayley. Are you wearing pink? I bet you are. Oh, I'm blushing. Yes, there is a lot of crap on PS2, but there are a lot of gems too. This month alone there's *Hitman* – but that's a bit violent for me – and *Okami*, which I like because you can paint things pink and it stars a big cuddly dog. Ken reckons every game on PS3 will be super-duper-duper, but I bet they're not all great. Some of them will be rubbish, but we can ignore them and just think about pink things until another great game comes along. Mmm, pink. Will you go out with me, Hayley?"

FUTURE SHOCKS

► Dear PSM2,
Will *Grand Theft Auto World* be out on PS3 or not until PS4?
Ben Dixon, Cheltenham
"No-one knows yet what next-gen *GTA* will involve, Ben. But it'll definitely be on PS3. See page 26 for more. PS4?! You're making my head hurt!"

APES RULE!
And you'll never know where we'll pop up next
If you think there's enough monkeys ruling the world... think again! We've just graduated from Ape Academy and are here to take over. Try to stop us.
APE ESCAPE
PlayStation.2
www.ape-club.com
3+
www.pegi.info
APE ACADEMY
APE ESCAPE P
PlayStation.2
APE ESCAPE 3

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Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP, INSIDER DIRT, ZERO BULLSHIT

AT LAST: SONY REVEAL FINAL PS3 HARDWARE, PRICE AND LAUNCH DATE

Great! Apart from the bit about the reduced system specs and it costing £425...

GO PADS: Ken shows off the finished PS3. The world's media play spot the difference.

On May 8th 2006, PSM2 once more rubbed shoulders, biros and voice-recorders with the world's gaming press at the E3 show in Los Angeles. Last year we were wowed by an incredible PlayStation 3 debut, Sony not only showing early technical demos but giving us a flavour of the games to come and revealing a final logo and casing design. How would they top this in 2006? Well, with the dust now settled on the show we can confidently state that... they didn't. Not even close.

The show gets off to a promising start. Leading the event is PSM2 favourite Kaz Hirai, the Chief Operating Officer of Sony America. "Make no mistake," he booms like a man who's been practising in front of a mirror. "PlayStation 3 is the most ambitious project we at Sony Computer Entertainment have ever undertaken. The next generation doesn't start until we say it does. Today the future becomes a reality."

Five minutes of PS2 and PSP bluster follow, with Kaz pointing out how they've added features to PSP throughout it's life and will continue to do so. Very nice, but not why we're here. And neither is the video that follows, showing 'dudes' from all over the world saying what PlayStation means to them. "I heard that the graphics was like, crazy!" offers one yoof. It's all a little embarrassing. Can we have PS3 now, Kaz?

Yes, we can. "Every PS3 will ship with a hard drive," he boasts. Great news. He talks of every user being able to get at downloadable content and games using the HDD for caching and mentions the November 2006 launch date again. So far so good. The machine will initially only be available in "clear black" we're told. No silver or white? Fair enough, black was our favourite colour anyway.

Time for a game demo. Tall guy Phil Harrison (the boss of Sony Worldwide Game Studios) comes on stage and invites Kazunori Yamauchi on to show off *Gran Turismo*. Or rather *1920 x 1080p Gran Turismo HD*, as they insist on calling it.

It's impressive. Though it's cold hard simulation rather than genuine next-gen

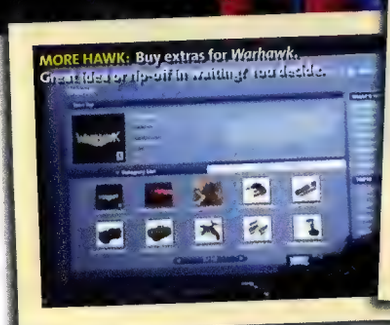
"HOW WOULD SONY TOP LAST YEAR'S E3? THEY DIDN'T. NOT EVEN CLOSE"

THE HIGH DEFINITION DIFFERENCE

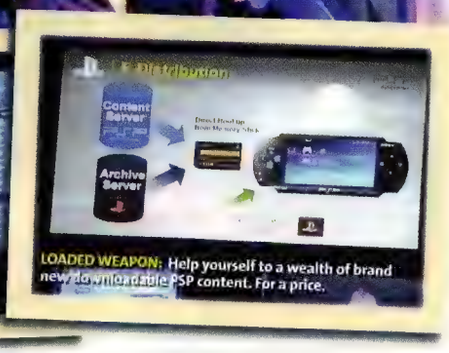
Sony are all about numbers. While Xbox 360 finds its feet with developers and produces its second wave of games, PS3 has to go into next-generation battle with its very first set of titles. Hence Sony's reliance on the magical 1080p number and their insistence that PS3 is 'better' – even if you can't yet see it in the games.

Fact: Xbox 360 can't go as high-def as PS3. But the fact that your current high-def TV (yes, even the one you just bought) can't show PS3's maximum 1080p resolution has passed them by. You can only see the difference between 720p (Xbox's top resolution) and 1080p if you see the two side by side. Perhaps Sony had better drop the '1080p' line and instead concentrate on producing games where we can see the PS3 difference rather than be told about it in specs.

STAND AND DELIVER: Sony put their wares to the world's professional gaming press. And PSM2.



MORE HAWK: Buy extras for *Warhawk*. Great idea or rip-off in waiting? You decide.



LOADED WEAPON: Help yourself to a wealth of brand new downloadable PSP content. For a price.

"WE'RE PROMISED GAMES, MOVIES AND MUSIC – ALL DOWNLOADABLE"

emotion. We see four different tracks and while there are bikes on offer from the vehicle select screen (which looks stunningly cool and hi-res) Kaz doesn't pick them. See page 46 for our verdict, but it left us impressed, if a little cold. Worth mentioning, though, are the incredibly fast load times – just two seconds from menu to race. "*GT* will not expand, but explode," Yamauchi tells us, and will be on sale "not too far from the launch of PS3." So no to a *GT* launch game, then. Shame.

Hirai returns to the stage to talk PS3 online. We're promised games, music and movies all downloadable, with the actual service being free. Hirai shows a "PlayStation Card", with a $50 face value. The screen behind him shows a PS3 web page for *Warhawk*, packed with game-enhancements for download. We note an 'Arid Wasteland' level for sale at $6.95... They might call them "micro-transactions" but paying $50 for a pre-paid card then paying four quid for a level isn't too 'micro' to us. Still, this is the future, Kaz insists.

Time for some more 'micro transaction' fun. Kaz pulls out a PSP and demonstrates the "launching soon" PSP download service, allowing you to buy and download PSone games direct to your memory card. He's conveniently already downloaded a game for us (so we don't see how long it takes). It's... PSone *Ridge Racer!* Why would you want that when you've already got *Ridge* on PSP? He plays it. It looks rough (as rough as the original) and very dodgy in squished 4:3 ratio. Fortunately he can artificially stretch it to fill the 16:9 PSP screen. The crowd are losing interest. "Whoo!" whoops Kaz trying to inject some excitement to the spectacle of a tiny, lonely man on a massive stage playing a rubbish ten-year-old game on a tiny pocket-sized console.

DEMO NO-NO

After a short *Singstar* demo (mainly focusing on how they'll be able to sell you extra downloadable songs) things take a turn for the worse. It's time for another demo and Phil Harrison welcomes on stage the Producer of *Genji 2* – a man clearly incapable of playing his own game. The graphics look good, but nothing that a top end PS2 game couldn't kick out (see *God of War 2* on page 116 for evidence). We shuffle in our seats. When will this demo end?

Next is *F1* – again, looking hi-res but ultimately rather disappointing. And as for the ability to use PSP as a wing mirror

Accelerator

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP. INSIDER DIRT. ZERO BULLSHIT

PRICE AND LAUNCH DATE

Here's the full list of global PS3 launch dates and prices. Sony are promising two million units at launch with a further four million following soon after. Quite how many of this initial two million will make it to the UK is up for debate. If Japan steal a million (at least), and America take another 800,000 (at least) then that's 200,000 left for the whole of Europe. 25,000 in the UK for launch day? Even that might be optimistic. Hmm.

JAPAN:
NOVEMBER 11TH
20Gb: ¥59,800 = £288
60Gb: Open price, to be set by the retailers.

AMERICA:
NOVEMBER 17TH
20Gb: $499 = £265
60Gb: $599 = £318

EUROPE:
NOVEMBER 17TH
20Gb: €499 = £339
60Gb: €599 = £408

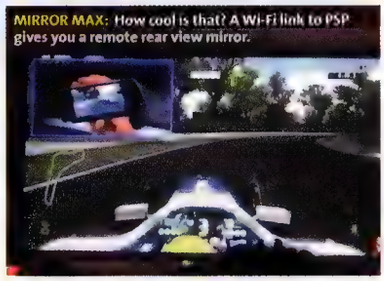
UNITED KINGDOM:

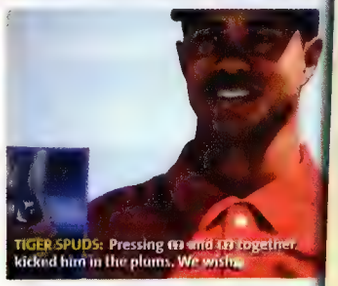
20Gb: £349? 60Gb: £425?

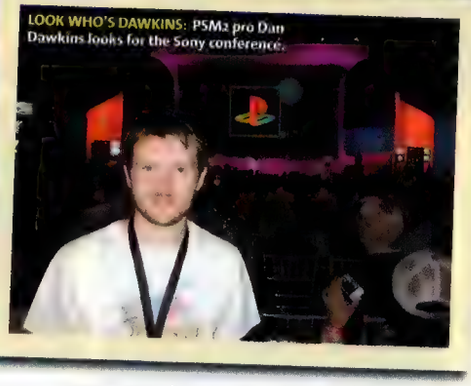
How much will PS3 cost in the UK? Expect the usual unfair inflation on those Euro/Dollar/Yen prices. Industry gossips (PSM2 included) are already predicting final retail prices of £359 and £425 (ouch!) for UK models. Start saving that cash now.

PORT IN THE ACT

Remember the PlayStation 3 shown at last years E3 show? Remember all the ports all over the thing? Well many have bitten the dust – especially on the 20Gb version. See Ken also announced two PS3's at the show – a 20Gb version (with a 20Gb hard drive built in) and a 60Gb (with a 60Gb drive). What he didn't mention at the time (and what we discovered later) was that the differences go much deeper. See page 56 for more.


MIRROR MAX: How cool is that? A Wi-Fi link to PSP gives you a remote rear view mirror.


TIGER SPUDS: Pressing [redacted] and [redacted] together kicked him in the plums. We wish...


LOOK WHO'S DAWKINS: PSM2 pro Dan Dawkins looks for the Sony conference.

(with the game beaming the data required over to your PSP wirelessly), let's just say it reeked of novelty rather than practicality.

More games follow. *Heavenly Sword* (see page 52), *Lair* (page 35), *The Getaway* (page 46), *Afrika* (page 35) and – highlight of the presentation – *Eight Days* (page 38). This looked great, but we smell another *Killzone* demo. It just looked too good to be real and the inclusion of an ammo meter on screen in some shots to make it feel more in-game wasn't fooling anyone. If it *was* proper in-game footage however, it was amazing.

Time for a special guest. Ted Price of Insomniac demos *Resistance: Fall of Man* on PS3. Formerly known as *I-8* last year, this looks the business, though the rubber aliens were a little floppy at times. See page 40 for more.

"FATAL INERTIA – THE *ONLY* GAME TO PROMISE TO BE OUT AT LAUNCH"

More videos. *Assassin's Creed* (page 32), *Ridge Racer 7* (page 29), *Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway* (see last issue), *Tekken 6* (page 28), *Sonic* (51), *Virtua Tennis 3* (42), *Virtua Fighter 5* (38), *Stranglehold* (37), and *Fatal Inertia* – the only game to definitely promise to be "Available at launch" (45).

Next, Larry Probst of EA demos *NBA* on PS3 (looking good, but not especially so) and a frighteningly lifelike virtual Tiger Woods (effectively replacing last year's Alfred Molina demo) who goes through a repertoire of Tiger phrases. Spooky and brilliant. A few vids from EA follow, including a blink-and-you'll-miss-it flash of *Need For Speed: Carbon* with a car in the shadows. Hmm... Is that it?

Time for the big guns. We see a video of *Final Fantasy XIII* (see page 48). It looks superb and convincingly in-game. Things are picking up nicely. Especially when they show the new *MGS4* trailer straight after. But what's this? It's only a few minutes long? Fortunately Konami themselves

AFRIKA SHOX: The new Lara looked lovelier than ever. Er... Hang on.

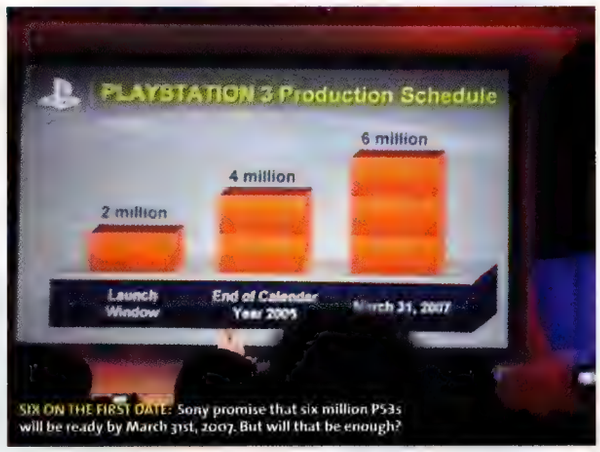
GTA4 NO SHOW?

It's only the biggest game in the world, so why didn't Sony even mention it at their E3 conference? It fell to Microsoft to announce *GTA4* at their event the day after, leading many to incorrectly assume that it would be a 360 exclusive. We can only assume that Microsoft paid handsomely for the privilege. See page 26 for more.

grand theft auto IV™

PHIL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: KEN HAMMERS: Phil Harrison flies a virtual PS3 pad while proud 'father of the PlayStation' Ken Kutaragi looks on.

EASY LAVA: Just one of the other-worldly posters Sony put up around Los Angeles before the PlayStation 3 launch.



SIX ON THE FIRST DATE: Sony promise that six million PS3s will be ready by March 31st, 2007. But will that be enough?

showed a far better full 15-minute trailer the following day (see page 22).

TILT TO LAST

It's the big finish. Ken Kutaragi and Phil Harrison come on stage. "I have one more big thing that we have kept secret from you," announces Ken. He holds the new PS3 joypad... and it looks exactly the same as the old one. Phil sparks up a demo on the huge screen featuring a box with the words "Not to be opened until E3" written on it. He picks up a second pad from the table and the box opens and a pad on-screen flies up into the air. He tilts – it tilts. A tilt controlled joypad?! "And it's lighter than the DualShock 2," Phil says. Impressive. Let's see it in action.

A *Warhawk* demo follows, with Dylan Jobe from developers Incognito tilting and tipping the pad to fly his craft around the skies. A camera has a close up on his hands and we can see the pad and plane moving in perfect synchronisation. "Don't you just love surprises?" asks a clearly proud-to-bursting Phil Harrison.

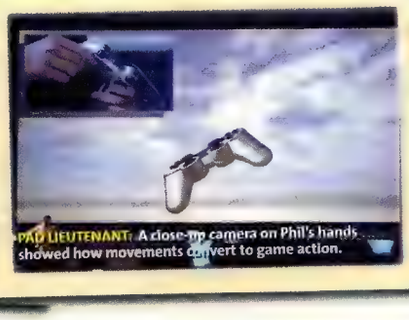
One final surprise. "Today we're pleased to announce the global PS3 launch plan. There will be two configurations for launch. One with a 60Gb HDD one with 20Gb," says Ken. Wow. Two machines? And two prices?... 499 and 599?... Please say that's Euros not pounds. It is? Thank God. Still, that's mighty expensive. Japanese launch, November 11th... UK and US launch November 17th – just one week later. And two million machines for launch, a further two million before Christmas and another two million before end of March. Just two million at launch, notice. That's not much for the whole world...

A final parting shot from Hirai. He drops in upcoming *Devil May Cry* and *Resident Evil* titles into his closing statement (so why not show them then eh?) and then – phew – it's all over.

PSM RECKONS *Last year we could barely breathe at the Sony conference, such was our excitement. This year, it left us a little flat. What we're seeing is the first steps of a brand new super powerful console. Developers are clearly just getting to grips with the machine and while the line-up was impressive we could always imagine better. There simply wasn't an astonishing 'Killzone' moment like last year. Turns out that there were plenty of amazing games at the show – though why Sony didn't demo those will remain a mystery. For now their E3 2006 presentation will go down in history as 'good'... but 'could do better'.*

"THERE WERE LOTS OF AMAZING GAMES – BUT SONY DIDN'T DEMO THEM"

BE GREATER THAN NEVER: Sony's final surprise came in this virtual crate.



PAD LIEUTENANT: A close-up camera on Phil's hands showed how movements convert to game action.

DOES THE 20GB VERSION EVEN EXIST?

Get ready for a bizarre twist in the PS3 story... the 20Gb version might not ever be released, according to the latest rumour. Phil Harrison has admitted that the 60Gb unit is far more important for them and (at the time of going to press) UK game store Gamestation has begun taking pre-orders for PS3, but ONLY for the 60Gb version. The rep we spoke to told us that they were acting on information from Sony. "There has been no confirmation that we will be selling the 20Gb version. So we're only taking orders on the 60Gb."

It's exactly the same situation as happened at the Xbox 360 launch. The 'core' package sold in poor numbers compared to the 'premium' unit and – it was said – was only there to allow Microsoft to claim an 'affordable' £209 price tag. Could Sony be doing the same thing? Or is the 20Gb unit just a fantasy in order for them to claim a psychologically important sub-£400 price tag? Time will tell.

ALL WHITE NOW

Sony announce new white PSP for the UK. Just look how cool, stylish and sexy it makes you look!

While the rest of world had the white PSP ages ago, us Brits got the rum deal. Again. But finally Sony have finally allowed confirmed a UK launch for the 'ceramic white' PSP and, thankfully, these ultra-cool pieces of kit will be the exact same price as the black version (RRP £179.99) and come packing a 32MB Memory Stick Duo, headphones with remote control, wrist strap and pouch – all in white. So you now have the perfect accessory for that gleaming pearly-white smile.

But apart from the obvious colour difference, nothing else has changed. Although judging by these press-shots, only beautiful catalogue-model people can play it. Anyway, it'll instantly make you more fashionable as you carry it down the street – before being duffed-up and robbed by a gang of chavtastic hoodies. Hey!

PSM RECKONS *Imagine just how stylish you can look? The white PSP it's certainly a fashion statement – and we're sick of the sight of our black PSP. But just like that lovely shirt you bought at River Island last week, you'll soon see everyone with one – instantly quashing any semblance of individuality. Still, it certainly looks the business.*

"YOUR MOBILE PHONE COULD GO THE WAY OF THE FLARED TROUSER"

COMING TO A PSP SOON...

It's not all cosmetic and silly. Announced at E3 were a massive raft of add-ons and new features guaranteed to make PSP even more gorgeous.

ADD-ON CAMERA

WHAT IS IT?
A camera that plugs into the top of your PSP. Rumoured resolution is 1.3 Megapixels – based on the 480x272 resolution of PSP's screen – but it could go much higher. Allows you to take snapshots video footage and play a new wave of rumoured EyeToy-like games.
WHEN CAN I GET IT?
Summer '06.
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
There's a novelty value attached (most camera phones have equally powerful shooting power) but the idea of IP wireless videochat for is an amazing feature. Imagine finding a wireless hotspot and connecting to your friend's PSP for free. Your mobile could go the way of the flared trouser.

RSS FEED COMPATIBILITY

WHAT IS IT?
Really Simple Syndication allows news updates from millions of websites to be delivered automatically to your PSP, rather than trawling through them individually.
WHEN CAN I GET IT?
Audio Downloads – Spring '06.
Video Downloads – Summer '06.
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
You can keep up to date with the latest news about games, sport or Paris Hilton's shoes without faffing around on websites. Tell PSP what you want and it'll download stuff for you automatically and for free.

LOCATIONFREE TV

WHAT IS IT?
This service allows you to watch TV and DVDs and listen to music on your PSP whenever you like. A LocationFree Base Station at home plugs into your living room boxes and your broadband connection then fires the lot across the web to your PSP. Change channels and music tracks as if you were in the room next to them (rather than on the other side of the world).
WHEN CAN I GET IT?
The LFTV Base Station hits the UK this Summer for about £200.
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
Long train journeys will fly by if you're watching episodes of The Simpsons on your shiny handheld. Plus, you'll never need to worry about forgetting to set your Sky Plus recorder again.

PLATINUM RANGE

WHAT IS IT?
A budget range of PSP titles that'll set you back around £19.99. So far there are 20 games in line for the platinum treatment – which have to have sold 250,000 units in order to attain said metallic status – including *Virtua Tennis: World Tour, Pursuit Force* and *WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 2006.*
WHEN CAN I GET IT?
Right now.
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
If you couldn't be bothered to fork out thirty-five notes for old PS2 ports, now you can grab them for a full £15 less.

PLAYSTATION SPOT

WHAT IS IT?
Download free content from over 300 hotspots across nine countries. This includes game demos, music tracks and movie trailers – direct to your PSP.
WHEN CAN I GET IT?
Later this year.
WHY SHOULD I TRY IT?
Now you can try out games, hear music tracks and even watch movies for free before spending your hard-earned cash.

GPS

WHAT IS IT?
Global Positioning System – a satellite-driven map that can be accessed directly from your PSP.
WHEN CAN I GET IT?
This Summer.
WHY SHOULD I BUY IT?
Sometimes people get lost – and if you need to find the quickest route out of Glaswegian council estate this is a must, Andy tells us. A couple of clicks and you'll find the nearest side-street and escape to safety. Don't buy that portable Sat-Nav system just yet. Get a GPS add-on for your PSP – cheaper and you get a PSP thrown in for 'free'.

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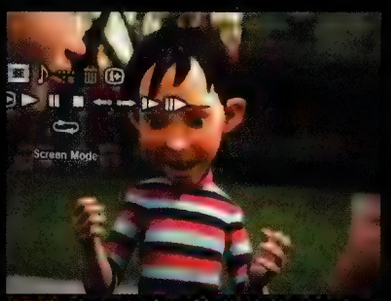
PS3 MENUS MASTERED

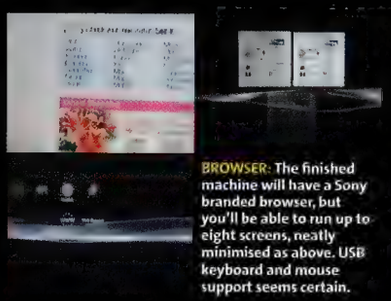
It *looks* like PSP's, but here's how PS3's menu system will control your front room.

USERS: A bit like a PC or Mac, everyone who uses your PS3 has their own User profile, with unique security settings and preferences – plus a record of your online achievements and buddy settings.

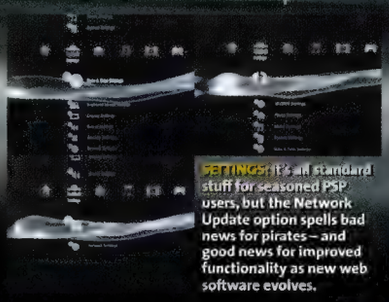
PHOTOS: Uploaded via standard Sony memory stick or – we presume – direct via USB from digital camera, this works almost exactly like the PSP system, with slideshows, zoom functions and so on.



MOVIES: Once again, almost identical to the PSP system, but you can download movies online direct to your HDD. The quality was as crisp as you'd expect, running at only slightly less impressive resolution than Blu-Ray.

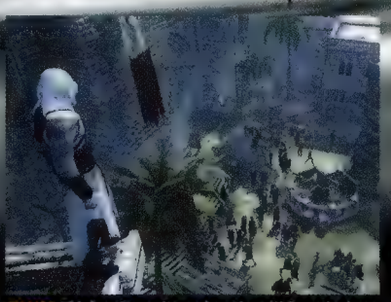


BROWSER: The finished machine will have a Sony branded browser, but you'll be able to run up to eight screens, neatly minimised as above. USB keyboard and mouse support seems certain.



SETTINGS: It's all standard stuff for seasoned PSP users, but the Network Update option spells bad news for pirates – and good news for improved functionality as new web software evolves.

MUSIC: Click on an artist, then scroll across to look at individual albums or songs. We didn't see music videos playing, but there's a swirly screensaver when you press 'play'. Online song downloads are certain, too.



GAMES: This barely merits explanation. Click on the icon to load up your game disk. We're not sure if games will load automatically (like when you insert a disk in PS2) or be selected manually like Xbox 360.

FRIENDS: Sony kept this option under wraps, but we're expecting an Xbox 360-style friends tracking list, which shows when they're online, with a list of all their recent gaming achievements to foster stern competition.

Gamers were flocking to play PS3 on Sony's gargantuan E3 stand, but most ignored potentially the most revolutionary next-gen software of all – PS3's menu systems. The demo was tucked away in an enclosed booth and reveals how Sony plans to control your front room, integrating all your movies, music, photos and games onto PS3's HDD. Digging deeper, they're the first indication of Sony's online strategy, with Friends lists, browsing facilities (like Google) and micro-transactions.

The first thing to strike you is the similarity to the PSP menu system, with concise, but clear icons which expand into drop-down lists when clicked. You can move sideways to view content within individual files, like the Movies slideshow above. The screen is mostly black, but with a swirly grey/silver/blue 'vortex' in the middle to indicate the machine is switched on and 'thinking'. It's minimal, but hugely functional, and after exploring ourselves, we've outlined each key feature above.

PSM RECKONS *It's unspectacular, but attractive, and we applaud the synergy with the PSP system. We're not sure what if offers above, say, a multimedia PC (save aesthetic appeal), but look forward to digging deeper. Still no sign of the PS3 start-up sequence and 'power up' jingle, mind.*

PS3 BLU-RAY: FIRST VERDICT

Sony demoed PS3's Blu-Ray player on a 56" Sony Bravia. It looked bright and crisp, but lacked the 'wow' factor. It's clearly distinguishable from real life. Colours lacked vibrancy, but that may be down to the dull palette of the Da Vinci Code trailer used.

E3 2006 PLAYERS

The most controversial quotes of E3... and what they *really* mean.

Wild claims and puffed-up marketing speak are commonplace at E3 and this year was no different. Here are our highlights of the many baffling quotes blurted out by E3's top industry players.

WHO?	HIDEO KOJIMA Producer, Kojima Productions	ATSUSHI INABA Producer, Clover Studios	PHIL HARRISON President, Sony Worldwide Studios	KEN KUTARAGI Group CEO, Sony Computer Entertainment	PETER MOORE Executive, Microsoft Games
WHAT THEY SAID	"TO BE HONEST, THE NEWS OF THE CONTROLLER'S TILT FUNCTION CAME TO US ONLY A LITTLE BIT BEFORE YOU, SO IT'S A SURPRISE TO US AS WELL."	"THIS YEAR'S E3 IS BORING. THE LAST-GEN CONSOLES ARE NOT EXCITING ENOUGH TO MAKE GAMES ON, BUT NOBODY IS CONFIDENT WITH NEXT-GEN TECH TO DO ANYTHING INTERESTING. NEXT YEAR'S WILL BE MUCH BETTER."	"OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAMS HAVE BEEN CONVERTING PS3'S TECHNOLOGY INTO MAGIC."	"THIS IS THE PS3 PRICE. EXPENSIVE, CHEAP – WE DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK OF IT IN TERMS OF GAME MACHINES. BECAUSE THE PS3 IS LIKE NOTHING ELSE."	"MICROSOFT AND ROCKSTAR GAMES HAVE ENTERED INTO A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE [GRAND THEFT AUTO 4] ON OUR CONSOLE FROM DAY ONE."
WHAT WE SAY	<slaps forehead> What?! Kojima is one of your most important developers, Sony! Why didn't you tell him about the tilt function? Oh, that's right, because it was a last minute attempt to get one over Nintendo's motion-sensing Wii controller. Doh.	Inaba is known for designing the world's most creative, interesting games (*Okami*, *Viewtiful Joe* etc), so we understand his pain. Surrounded by crime sim after crime sim, we can see why it'd depress him. Chin up, though, mate.	Is this actually true? Is *Genji 2* or a hi-def upgrade of a PS2 game *magic?* We've heard some mad statements in our time, but this is one of the worst. Still, kudos for reading it off the auto-cue while keeping a straight face.	Sorry mate, but paying over £400 for a games console will *always* be too much. "Is it not nonsense to compare the charge for dinner at a cafeteria with dinner at a fine restaurant?" he explains. Yes, that is nonsense. Thanks.	Nicely worded, Pete. It's almost as if you're trying to say that the next *GTA* game will be Xbox 360 exclusive. But the reality is, it'll be released on both machines. Rockstar even out out a press release clearing up this fact while you were still speaking.

X-MEN: THE LAST STAND COMPETITION

Win a video iPod and official X-Men prizes!

To celebrate the release of X-Men: The Last Stand, we've teamed up with Twentieth Century Fox to give away this mutant-sized horde of film-based goodies. One lucky winner will receive a fantastic 30Gb video iPod, an X-Men-branded digital camera and a slimline PS2 to play the game on when it comes out. But don't worry if you don't win – two runners up will net a sack of goodies, including a T-shirt, dog tags, a portable radio and loads more. To win, all you have to do is answer this question and send your answer to us, marked 'X-Men compo'.

Q. WHO PLAYS WOLVERINE IN THE X-MEN FILMS? IS IT...
A. HUGH JACKMAN
B. TOM HANKS
C. JOHN TRAVOLTA

X-Men: The Last Stand is released nationwide on May 25th 2006 by Twentieth Century Fox.

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- HEAVENLY SWORD ★ ARMY OF TWO ★ SUPERMAN ★ TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8
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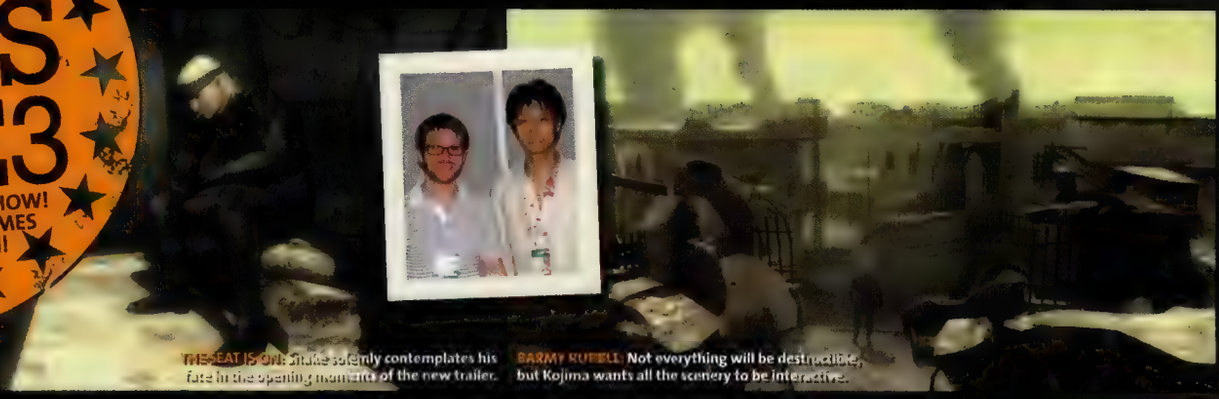
PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!



THIS SEAT IS ON: Snake solemly contemplates his fate in the opening moments of the new trailer.

BARMY RUBBLE: Not everything will be destructible, but Kojima wants all the scenery to be interactive.

Format: PS3 Developer: Kojima Productions Publisher: Konami ETA: 2007

METAL GEAR SOLID 4 GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

What's happened to Raiden? Hideo Kojima reveals all to PSM2...

Best game of E3? Possibly – but even though the three-minute teaser trailer shown at Sony's pre-E3 conference only sparked polite applause, the full fifteen minute epic (see the screens below) left the E3 crowd roaring in delight. While relatively low in action, the stunning visuals, dramatic cinematography and teasing plot hints left us aching for more. And for the record, the guy in the Ninja suit IS *Metal Gear Solid 2*'s much-derided hero Raiden, who steals the show by dispatching seven organic Metal Gears in a flurry of acrobatics and blade attacks at the end of the trailer. Better yet – PSM2 can reveal – the reason his jaw is black and messed up is because he's partly a *machine*. And the revelations don't stop there...

"Raiden won't be playable," confirmed Kojima to us, matter of factly, but the reality may be more complex. The evidence suggests that Raiden might be a reincarnation of Ninja (from *MGS* on PSone and the original MSX games), a sword-wielding, cybernetically enhanced soldier with advanced agility, strength and cloaking abilities. In a further twist, Raiden looks spookily like white-haired fop Gray Fox (see below), who was genetically engineered to become the original Ninja after horrific injuries. In the MSX games, Gray Fox was adopted by Big Boss (of *MGS3*) who, in a further complication, returns in *MGS4*. Confusing, eh? The upshot is that *Ninja*, not Raiden, may be playable – or at least play a key role in cut scenes.

The trailer's key revelation is that Snake will be equipped with an active camouflage system called 'Octo-cam' – a fusion of 'Octopus' and 'Camouflage'. Kojima is keen to point out that an Octopus can change its colour, pattern and *shape* – mimicking bumps, holes and texture. Using this, Snake can 'meld' into the background, mirroring the dimensions of his environment – a graphical effect only possible on PS3. For example, note how the Octo-cam absorbs the texture of the broken melon in the trailer shots.

"SNAKE WILL HAVE A CAMOUFLAGE SYSTEM CALLED 'OCTO-CAM'"

Stealth is still a key priority. "You will not have it switched on all the time, and the face will not be invisible," reveals Kojima. "But if you stay still the suit will blend in automatically. It returns to normal when you move." We're already expecting tense cat-and-mouse scenarios, like the Metal Gear evasion bit in the trailer, where Snake is forced to hide perilously close to foes for fear of breaking his camouflage. Scenarios will be dynamic, so if your covering wall explodes, you'll have to quickly lay flat to merge into the floor. "You might want to avoid using the Octo-Cam all the time," advises Kojima. "Because if you rest by the toilet, you will absorb its pattern, and that will not be stylish."

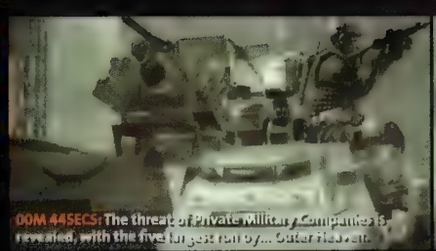
Sadly, the environments may not be as destructive as first thought. "We want all the scenery to be interactive, but even on PS3 there are limits," confesses Kojima. "In some buildings you can destroy everything, but in other rooms, only certain scenery – it should be easy to tell them apart." For example, in the trailer, the Metal Gear tramples and destroys the stairs, but the main platforms remain intact. Snake will have a variety of new moves to explore with – including a new one inspired by Kojima's real life army training – but this is secret.

MGS4 will embrace the PS3 pad's 6D movement function (see page 56), but *how* is up for debate. "To be honest, the pad news came to us only a little bit before you, so it was a surprise to us as well," confesses Kojima. "Perhaps you can use it to look around in FPS mode, or to shake guards for items (like traditional *MGS*), but nothing is decided." *MGS4* will also link with PSP's *Metal Gear: Portable Ops*, but the format is still being discussed. "It will be linked with the ongoing

FEET, BUT YOU KNOW IT: The new organic Metal Gears use their 'legs' as arms to scale awkward scenery.

EXCLUSIVE TRAILER

Here are the highlights from the full fifteen minute *MGS4: Guns of the Patriots* trailer. We'll have the full movie in crisp DVD-quality on next month's disk, but for now, feast on these genuine PS3 visuals. All hail Koj.



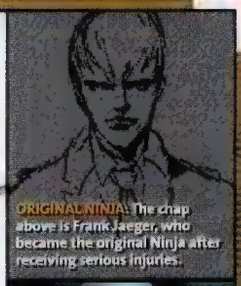
DOM 445ECS: The threat of Private Military Companies is revealed, with the five largest run by... Outer Heaven.

OSM 845: Soldiers are controlled by nanomachines, preventing them from pointing guns at clients.

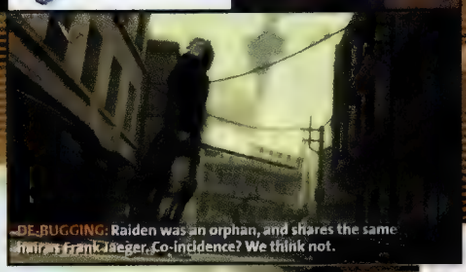
CONTINUED>>>

MEET NINJA!

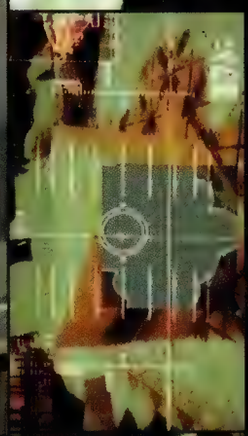
Frank Jaeger (right) was an orphan rescued from slavery by Big Boss (the hero of *MGS3*), and grew up to fight as a soldier. After being captured and tortured, he was rescued by Big Boss, and adopted a fellow orphan, Naomi, out of guilt of killing her parents. Frank became part of Big Boss' FOXHOUND unit in 1990, earning the title of Gray Fox. After the events of Metal Gear 2 on MSX, Fox was left for dead, but rebuilt using a robot exoskeleton by FOXHOUND scientists to become Ninja. In PSone *MGS*, he cuts off Ocelot's arm, and dies helping Solid Snake.



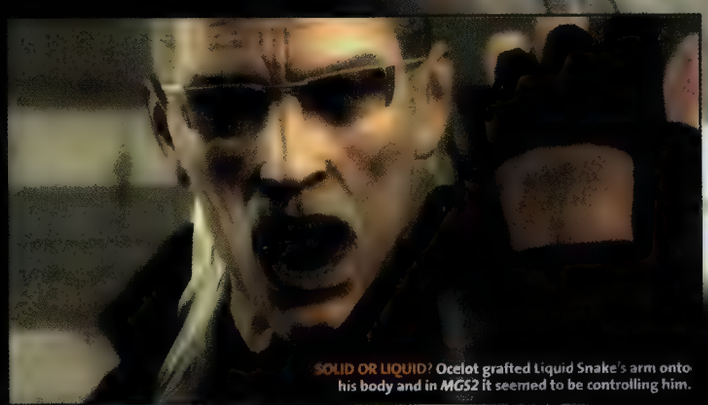
ORIGINAL NINJA: The chap above is Frank Jaeger, who became the original Ninja after receiving serious injuries.



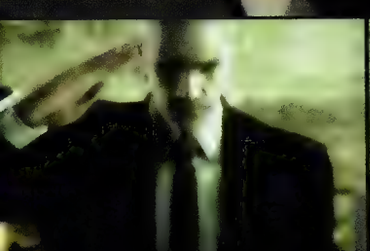
DE-BUGGING: Raiden was an orphan, and shares the same hair... Frank Jaeger. Co-incidence? We think not.

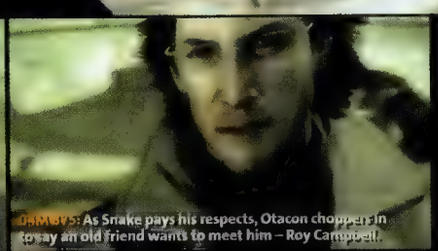


07M 49S: Snake hides in a box... or does he? Cue the introduction of the Octo-Cam.



SOLID OR LIQUID? Ocelot grafted Liquid Snake's arm onto his body and in *MGS2* it seemed to be controlling him.





04M 07S: As Snake pays his respects, Otacon chopper's in to say an old friend wants to meet him – Roy Campbell.

05M 05S: Snake is ambushed by one the new 'organic' bipedal Metal Gears.

UAM 525: The Octo-Cam absorbs the texture of the wall – and the broken melon on the floor.

...ject *Metal Gear Online*, which may be included as part of *MGS4*, or released separately," teases Kojima. All three are linked – and raises the prospect of a standalone *MGS Online* game for PS3.

REST IN PEACE?

Will Snake really die? The trailer reveals he's only got six months to live (a result of accelerated aging since he was created by the Les Enfants Terrible cloning project – all the other characters only look a few years older), and at the end of the trailer, one side of his face is mangled, as if he's decomposing. Our suggestion that Snake years old and still designing *MGS* games, in many ways I am also on the battlefield." So is Snake's fate a metaphor for Kojima's involvement with *MGS*? "Yes... my Metal Gear will end <laughs>, but the series belongs to Konami, and the fans, but I do have the liberty to stop, and this will be my last *Metal Gear* game." Worst-case scenario? Kojima is retiring and taking Snake with him i.e. Snake *will* die – though given the game's reliance on cloning, don't be surprised if he, or Big Boss, returns in some form in years to come. And Kojima announced his 'retirement' once before, only to change his mind.

Don't despair – this is *Metal Gear* and anything can happen. Kojima has already hinted that there'll be a wider variety of environments than he's letting on, and lest we forget, this is the man that made us think we were playing as Snake in *MGS2*.

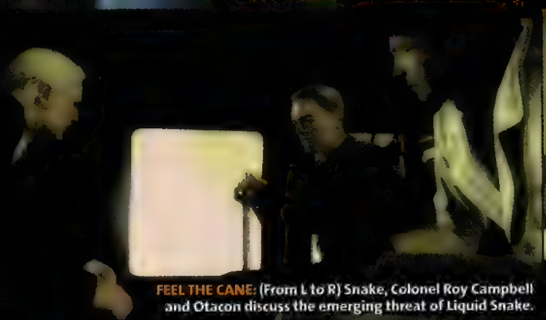
"I DO HAVE THE LIBERTY TO STOP. THIS WILL BE MY LAST METAL GEAR GAME'"

may have to complete his mission before a countdown runs out was met with a curious response. "We can't comment," teases Kojima. "But a time limit makes a game more dramatic, so it will be included to some extent."

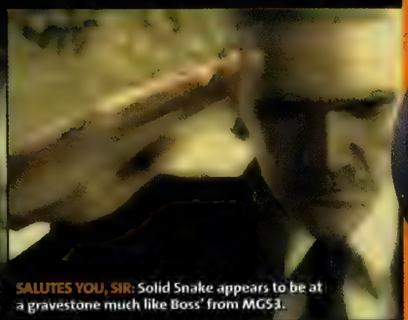
Kojima admits that Snake's old age reflects his attitude to working on *MGS4*. "We wanted to show Snake's human side, that he is hurt and aged but will still battle on," Kojima reveals. "I am over 40 only to devote the remaining 80% to Raiden. Given that the trailer begins with Snake saluting a grave – looking exactly like Boss' grave at the end of *MGS3*, correct to the fluttering white flowers – it could be that Big Boss, *MGS3*'s hero, has a part to play in *MGS4*. The *MGS* story is frankly too complicated for us to make any predictions, but one thing is sure – *MGS4* will be the best *exclusive* game on PS3 when it's released in 2007. Fact.

PSM2 RECKONS

It may not be playable, but it *will* look this good. We're slightly suspicious of how different the game will look from genuine in-game perspectives, but Kojima's reputation affords it the benefit of the doubt. Will Snake *really* die? Who's controlling Outer Heaven? Is Ocelot under the control of Liquid Snake? The answers to these questions will have to wait, but for now, we can feast on the potential.



FEEL THE CANE: (From L to R) Snake, Colonel Roy Campbell and Otacon discuss the emerging threat of Liquid Snake.



SALUTES YOU, SIR: Solid Snake appears to be at a gravestone much like Boss' from MGS3.

MERYL GEAR: Roy Campbell's niece, Meryl Silverburgh, returns from MGS to form the new FOXHOUND unit.

SNIPER ELITE: These guards brutally decimate a unit of private soldiers in the trailer's opening scenes.

AND THERE'S MORE...

METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS

Forget the cel shaded eccentricity of *Metal Gear Acid*, this is *proper MGS* on PSP, set seven years after the events of *MGS3* with Big Boss establishing FOXHOUND to stop the rogue FOX unit in South America. With cut-scenes from illustrator Ashley Wood (responsible for the style of the *MGS* Digital Graphic Novel), a story-led single player mode, plus online play inspired by *MGS3 Subsistence*, this should fill the missing link in the *MGS* timeline and explain the tragic loss that causes Big Boss to become a bad guy. You'll be able to recruit familiar characters like Sigint, Para-Medic and Major Zero to your unit, plus other legends from the *MGS* series. In an unusual twist, if someone dies during Wi-Fi play, they can't be revived – new players need to be 'recruited' in real-life by turning on their PSPs. The camera will be automatic to compensate for PSP's lack of a right analogue stick, though manual adjustments are possible, with – as Kojima revealed to us before realising he was meant to keep this secret – a first-person mode. Graphically, it's only slightly worse than *MGS3* on PS2, and due late 2006.

UAM 525: Snake controversially puts his gun in his mouth. Is our hero going to cash in his chips?

METAL GEAR SOLID: DIGITAL GRAPHIC NOVEL

It may look a novelty product for *MGS* completists, but the digital comic offers surprising levels of interactivity and some genuinely impressive rolling panels and speech bubbles, creating a more cinematic feel. Players will be able to 'scan' the pages for data to fill in an interactive wire-frame matrix – which looks like a spinning 3D cube – of *MGS* info. It'll build up into the most comprehensive *MGS* resource available, and prove ideal for those baffled by the intricacies of *MGS4*. All being well, it'll hit the UK later this summer.

UAM 775: Raiden (or Ninja) dispatches a group of Metal Gears in the big finale.

FLIP SERVICE: The trailer is slow-mo heavy, and really shows off the animation – here's Rodney Mullen mid-flip.

Format: PS3 Developer: Neversoft Publisher: Activision ETA: Autumn 2006

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

Next-gen *Tony Hawk* not only breaks with the Jackass-ery, but several bones as well.

After selling a billion dollars-worth of games worldwide, inventing over 50 tricks and landing the world's first 900°, Tony Hawk's doing something *really* remarkable – appearing in a skateboarding game. After the series veered dramatically off the rails with the Jackass-inspired excesses of *THUG2* – where key tasks involved throwing tomatoes at fat people and taking part in wheelchair races – the stunning next-gen game takes the series back to its roots. *THP8* has been completely rebuilt, with staggering animation and genuine physics, so skaters need to build momentum to make bigger jumps. Oh, and you can break your leg to score points, too.

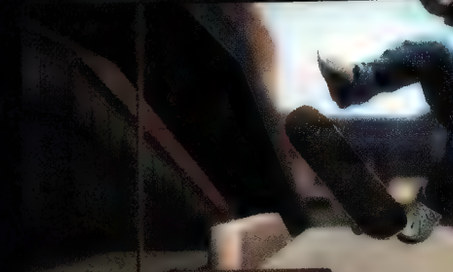
When you bail, your character will tumble along the floor snagging scenery, gaining combo points as you go. <Snapped Arm +500> It's a bit like the Crashbreaker junctions from *Burnout*. Mercifully, it's the only daft bit of a stunningly realistic game. Skaters look unique, with a new animation blending system, so you'll be able to tell if your skater is off-balance just by looking. In the demo, the skater wobbled and flapped his arms more as he slowed down, blending over six different animation routines. Skaters will suffer speed wobble (you can even see their trucks flex), and visibly 'pump' ramps to gain momentum, like real life.

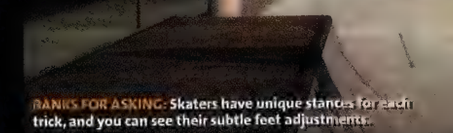
The game's set in a seamless city in Suburbia, with rail-stuffed schools and open streets bustling with pedestrians – you earn points, or 'Stokens', by landing tricks in front of big crowds, so you'll need to attract their attention. You start as a rookie, and need to earn sponsors to become one of Tony Hawk's 'Eight' best skaters in the world and unlock the fun park being built in town. The Park Editor's integrated into the game, so you can drop items into the level, while objectives are 'organic', with in-built Amateur, Pro and Sick targets. Slow-mo Focus mode returns, allowing you to see wheels spinning, the intricate deck graphics and the texture of each skater's shoes – incredible.

"SKATERS LOOK UNIQUE WITH A NEW ANIMATION BLENDING SYSTEM"

HOW REAL?

Skater's faces were scanned, then reproduced using 100,000 polygons. Skater's styles are mimicked using advanced motion capture techniques – from Rodney Mullen's twitchy precision to Hawk's soaring fluidity. It's dynamic, too, so ramp skaters look wobblier doing street moves.





RANKS FOR ASKING: Skaters have unique stances for each trick, and you can see their subtle feet adjustments.

PSM2 RECKONS

There's no denying the impact of the animation. Now if they can prune the Jackass stuff and use momentum *properly* – so you have to work for big jumps, rather than 'magically' gain speed as you grind – then consider us insanely excited.

PSM PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

grand theft auto IV

AND THERE'S 'NEW' GTA FOR PSP TOO

Just as we predicted months ago, Rockstar used the E3 show to announce their next PSP title: – a port of *GTA: Vice City* called *GTA: Vice City Stories*. Expect a similar reworking OF a familiar game. Just as *Liberty City Stories* lifted heavily from *GTA3*, it's safe to say that *Vice City Stories* will be doing exactly the same with PS2's *Vice City*. More info? Rockstar are saying nothing but as soon as they do, we'll have all the info first.

What? When? Why? With the announcement that *GTA4* will hit consoles everywhere on October 19th 2007, here's what else everyone's been asking...

WHY DIDN'T SONY ANNOUNCE IT?

Nobody's sure. Though Sony listed Rockstar as one of their developers for PS3, they didn't even mention *GTA* at their pre-E3 conference – the game was officially announced by Microsoft, in tandem with a press release confirming that it'll hit Xbox 360 and PS3 on the same day. After lagging behind on the last few instalments, the same-day release is clearly a huge relief for Microsoft... and we wouldn't be surprised if they put some sort of 'pressure' on Rockstar to let them spread the good news. It might be libellous to suggest that they offered them millions of pounds, though – so we won't.

DOES THIS MEAN ROCKSTAR ARE ABANDONING SONY?

Don't be stupid. It's just maths – the simple fact is, there *will* be more 360s than PS3s in the world next October, and they'd be insane not to support them. It's also worth noting that Rockstar's press release actually mentions PS3 first. Details, see?

SHOULD I PREORDER IT NOW?

No. Even though Rockstar have jokingly suggested that you should, it isn't coming out until October 16th 2007. Still, they can afford to be a *bit* arrogant about one of the biggest franchises of all time.

WHAT DOES MICROSOFT CLAIM OF 'EXCLUSIVE DOWNLOADS' MEAN?

It's not entirely clear. It could mean that both the 360 and PS3 will have different downloadable content – branded meat cleavers for the Xbox version, say, or PS3-exclusive jumpers. It's less likely – but distinctly possible – that you'll be able to download whole episodes online. On the other hand, the phrase might not be a reference to *Grand Theft Auto* at all – we scrutinised what was said and noticed that Rockstar simply mention agreements to provide 'content' for the machines, possibly unrelated to their biggest title. So they could be talking about upgrades for *Midnight Club*. Or a downloadable version of *State Of Emergency*. Well, maybe not that last one.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

We haven't got a clue... and neither has anyone else. Apart from what we've already mentioned, there are literally no details about *GTA4*, and it's more than a year away. So anything else you hear – "it's set in Toyko!" "Bigfoot'll be a playable character!" "The IV means it's set in ancient Rome!" – is just rabid speculation. Disregard it.

Format: PS3 Developer: Sony Publisher: Sony ETA: November

FORMULA ONE 06

Can *F1* recapture its former glory on PlayStation 3? Probably not.

Taking its place on the PS3 grid is – crack open that packet of party poppers you've had in the cupboard under the sink since Christmas – a new *F1* game. Oooh!

Sadly, the presentation is drier than a Goodyear tyre and there was no further news on the online features mentioned at this year's Games Developers Conference. Instead Big Phil banged on about how your PSP can be used as a rear-view mirror, but whether you can be bothered to weld it onto your sexy new HD-TV is another matter entirely.

PSM2 RECKONS *It doesn't look like a giant graphical leap from PS2, but no doubt this updated version of F1 will be packed with updated teams, drivers and tracks. If only Sony had mentioned the online aspects, eh?*

Format: PS3 Developer: Activision Publisher: Activision ETA: 2007

SPIDER-MAN 3

Does whatever a spider can, but in hi-def this time.

The short trailer we were treated to for the next Spidey game showed a shiny new version of the web-slinger jumping around on a rooftop. He looked amazing and the animation was super smooth.

Was it in-game? Probably, because it wasn't *quite* as good as it could've been. As for the game's content, we can only speculate, but we reckon the evil Sandman will be on villain duties this time around.

PSM2 RECKONS *It's little more than a tech demo right now but imagine a city to the scale of the one in Spider-Man 2, but rendered in real-time on PS3. Now imagine swinging through it, catching bad guys and spinning webs. This should be amazing. Mind you, the last Spidey game, Ultimate Spider-Man, was a little disappointing. Lessons have been learned.*

©Sony Pictures

Format: [illegible] Developer: [illegible] Publisher: Activision ETA: tbA

DARTH VADER

Our lack of faith is... disturbing...

Lord Vader's long been rumoured to be set for an inter-episode star turn, and the presence of a secret Lucasarts demo suggested we were about to see exactly that... but Mr Growly was nowhere to be seen.

Codenamed 'Force Unleashed', the behind-closed-doors demo showed a Jedi – unrecognisable, but definitely evil – slammin' Stormtroopers into walls and against attacking enemy ships. Using similar technology to Indiana Jones' 'Euphoria' engine, deaths and [illegible] occur in real time with pre-rendered animation. Carbonite, for instance, is easily smashable – demonstrated as we watch a carbonite statue of Jar Jar shatter in more than a dozen different ways. Take that you frikkin' moron. Bosh! It's very impressive stuff, leaving us with one worry: Vader himself *may not be the main character at all*, which upsets us immensely. Rumours are that the Sith lord'll be relegated to a cameo role as a padawan learner taken the path to the Dark Side. Bah.

PSM2 RECKONS

The technology on display leaves you breathless like a force-choke, but what's questionable is whether it'll change the way you play. Will we really notice the difference between pre-rendered and real-time crate deformation? We'll soon see.

PSM2 PRESENTS STARS OF E3 THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

Format: PS3 Developer: Namco Publisher: Namco ETA: TBA

TEKKEN 6

Two men and a little lady punch it out in Namco's teaser...

FIGHT CLUB: Perhaps the most important thing is for EA to get the combat just right.

JIN AND TONIC: There's Jin. And his vest. Look at the light and shade effects? Good, yes?

Format: PS3 Developer: Electronic Arts Publisher: EA Tiburon ETA: Late 2006

SUPERMAN RETURNS

We're still not sure how big your energy bar's going to be...

Interesting Super-fact, Kal El fans: EA told us that Supes' cape contains more polygons than the entire stadium and every single player from *Madden* on PSP. Whether this makes his cape really flappy or Madden completely crap we can't decide, but either way EA seem proud of themselves.

There's more than that to be excited about, though. We already knew that Metropolis covered more than 80 square miles, but we *didn't* know that nearly all of its 10,000 buildings would be destructible, or that there was a level set on 'Warworld'. We knew Metallo appeared, but now can tell you that Parasite'll be popping up, along with a Kevin Spacey-voiced Lex Luthor. And best of all, we knew that Supes has his powers from the start of the game, but didn't realise he'll be able to blow cars down the street with his super-breath.

PSM RECKONS *Though it's shaping up well, we applaud EA's decision to delay* Superman's release to tie in with the DVD – *hopefully they won't have to rush it and they'll be able to deliver something special. That said, the city looks a bit rubbish from a distance.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Namco Publisher: Namco ETA: TBA

RIDGE RACER 7

Another edition of the classic racing series heads for PS3.

Shown in trailer form on the show floor, this new *Ridge* looks stunning. The teaser opens with series mascot Reiko Nagase sitting at a table and looking terribly attractive. Well, as much as a girl made of polygons can.

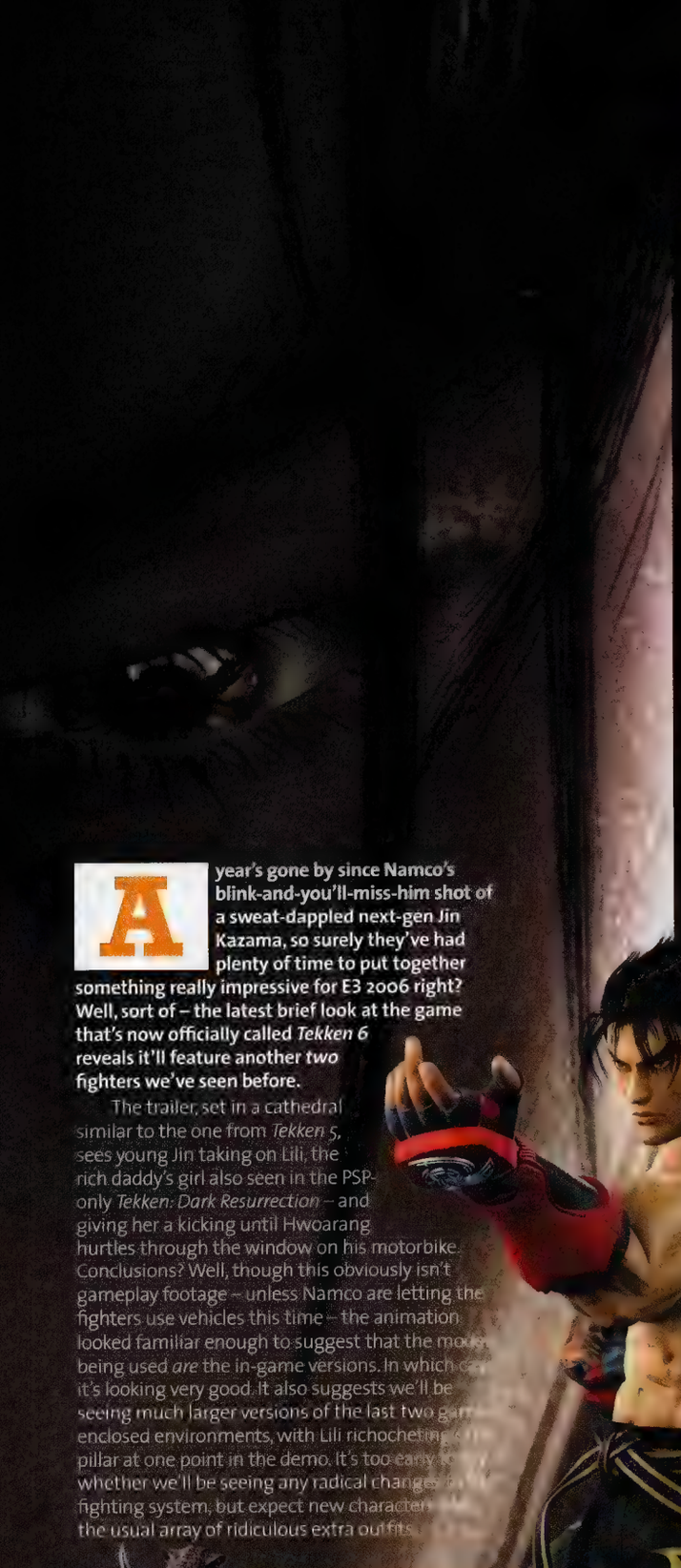
We're then treated to some (supposedly) in-game footage of characteristic *RR* cars drifting around a city at night. Examples of the game's beautifully sleek menu screens are also displayed, showing the game connecting to the Internet – this'll be as much an online experience as a single-player one.

PSM3 RECKONS *The last few Ridge games have been a disappointment and Namco have yet to top the PSone classic* RR: Type 4, *but after the excellent Ridge on PSP they may be getting their act sorted.*

LOOKING GOOD: Blimey. How gorgeous is this? But will it play as well as it looks?

A year's gone by since Namco's blink-and-you'll-miss-him shot of a sweat-dappled next-gen Jin Kazama, so surely they've had plenty of time to put together something really impressive for E3 2006 right? Well, sort of – the latest brief look at the game that's now officially called *Tekken 6* reveals it'll feature another *two* fighters we've seen before.

The trailer, set in a cathedral similar to the one from *Tekken 5*, sees young Jin taking on Lili, the rich daddy's girl also seen in the PSP-only *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* – and giving her a kicking until Hwoarang hurtles through the window on his motorbike. Conclusions? Well, though this obviously isn't gameplay footage – unless Namco are letting the fighters use vehicles this time – the animation looked familiar enough to suggest that the models being used *are* the in-game versions. In which case it's looking very good. It also suggests we'll be seeing much larger versions of the last two game enclosed environments, with Lili richochetting off a pillar at one point in the demo. It's too early to say whether we'll be seeing any radical changes to the fighting system, but expect new characters and the usual array of ridiculous extra outfits.



PSM2 RECKONS

After *Tekken Tag Tournament* came with the launch of PS2, we were hoping this might follow suit. But is Tekken really the game you'll be buying alongside your PS3 on launch day? That said, we're hoping for some serious gameplay revelations.

PSM3 PRESENTS STARS OF E3 – THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

ON AND ONLINE: This new *Ridge* is all about going online, not just playing with, sorry, by yourself.

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

Format: PS3 Developer: Free Radical Publisher: Ubisoft ETA: Spring 2007

HAZE

Mind control and jungle warfare with the next-gen spiritual successor to *TimeSplitters*.

LOCK AND LOAD: Your squad is heli-dropped into the warzone and soon come under heavy fire.

BEST ROUTE? Seconds later, one of your team storms up and puts this seemingly harmless man out of his misery.

Free Radical's new FPS might've only appeared behind closed doors at the Ubisoft booth, but it's easily their most accessible game yet. The demo level's set in a South American jungle – 'the best of the show' half-joked PSM2 fave developer Dave Doak referring to the countless plant-based FPS's at E3 – with lush foliage and bloom lighting reminiscent of EA's upcoming epic PC shooter *Crysis*. You work as part of a squad, ordering men around via the D-pad using a clear colour coding scheme. Doak told us that the AI will be truly next-gen and the realistic way in which squadmates duck, sprint and shoot between cover backs this up – reacting to real-time enemy fire. Visually, it's crisp, with bold red sunbeams blooming through chunky tropical leaves, with micro-textured jungle floors and slick animation. The detail is charming – stop still and a delicate glistening butterfly settles on your gun.

You play as a soldier in a corporately owned private army, equipped with nano-technology to increase your strength and awareness. But it seems the corporation are using it to take over the minds of its troops – in one section, a villager is mercilessly killed by one of your squadmates, who seems to have been overcome with a kind of blind rage. A 'haze' if you will. Yes.

DON'T SHOOT!

Free Radical guru Dave Doak pointed to a key scene where a villager pleads for his life and is shot by one of your squad, who appears to be temporarily shrouded in a red 'haze' as the words 'System Malfunction – Please contact administrator' flash on-screen. A big plot hint.

SKY'S THE LIMIT: We're promised loads more diverse locations, but they're being kept secret for now.

PSM2 RECKONS

Haze was running on a genuine PS3 dev kit, so it *will* look this good. Free Radical's distinctive style seems to have been ditched in favour of realistic visuals and subdued colours, but we expect their 'unique' sense of humour will remain intact.

Format: PS3 Developer: KCEI Publisher: Konami ETA: Summer 2007

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Will the new PSP version be any better? When's *PES* coming to PS3? And who'll win the world cup? Producer Seabass reveals all...

Everything will become clear in the summer," confesses *PES* Creator Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka, after successfully ducking our questions about *Pro Evolution Soccer* on PS3 for 15 rather awkward minutes. But the weird thing is, as we leave the room and flick though our *PES6* brochure, something catches our eye. In tiny letters, above three slightly plastic-looking but realistic renders of John Terry (about the same quality as the regular intro movie), are the words: 'Screens taken from next-generation platforms' – and while we're sort-of angry, our heart is secretly skipping with joy.

This we *do* know: the PS3 version won't be arriving until 2007. There'll be a stopgap version arriving on a competing next-gen system later this year, but the genuine article will debut on PS3. Rumours suggest the development team aren't happy with what they've achieved so far, and want the Sony version – the highest profile in Japan – to be the definitive next-gen game. Far from a cosmetic update, the PS3 version will feature advanced AI, incredibly fluid animation (just look at the leap made by *Tony Hawk's Project 8* on page 25 for some indication) and network play – which will feel like 'playing side-by-side' claims Seabass.

WHAT ABOUT THE PSP VERSION?

Here's *honestly* what happened when we asked Konami about the new PSP version. Warning: odd news ahead.

Have you been able to move the camera further away so we can see the action?

"Unfortunately, so far, it's impossible. But we are trying to solve the problem with research for future versions."

<A bit sad> Will you include a Master League mode, as hinted last year?

"We would love to include the Master League, but we cannot do that yet."

<Stony Silence> Do you have any *good* news about the PSP version?

<The entire team bursts into laughter proving they can secretly speak English and just like watching us struggle with a translator. Well, perhaps>

"The last PSP game was based on *PES5*, which was not suited to the system, but the new game will be a lot better. This game is much more fluid. The previous game was not comfy to play, but this will change."

"I BACK THE CZECH REPUBLIC..."

PSM2 grills Seabass

What changes can we expect between *PES6* and *Winning Eleven 10* (reviewed on page 86)?

"We'll be working on the AI, especially the goalkeepers (they currently flap a bit in *WE10*). Fans always find ways to score easy goals, so we destroy that and make them work harder – *PES6* will allow for much more spectacular goals, like crosses leading to volleys or overhead kicks."

What are your plans for the movement function of the PlayStation 3 pad?

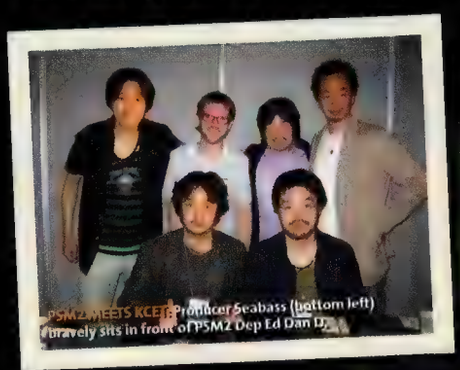
"We're not sure yet, but we will be using it just as we did the rumble function for PS2" <PSM2 suggests they use it for throw ins, by tipping the pad gently for short throws, moving it over 90° for long throws – but the team don't respond. Oddly >

Who will win the World Cup?

"The Czech Republic <the other four team members say Japan, to much laughter. Brazil, Brazil and England – if Rooney is fit."

You previously talked about a persistent online Master League in the PS3 version, where only one player can own, say, Ronaldinho – what's the latest on that?

"We've been contemplating it for a long time, but it will require a drastic change. We need to keep the balance so everyone can enjoy Master League, but we'll see."



PSM2 MEETS KCET: Producer Seabass (bottom left) bravely sits in front of PSM2 Dep Ed Dan D.

NEW BALL GAME: John Terry's expression is a little odd, but there's no doubting the quality of next-gen *Pro Evo*.

HEADS UP!

Next-gen *Pro Evolution Soccer* focuses on creating fluid, and player-specific, animations, with special emphasis on the battle between attacker and defender. Next gen *Indiana Jones* (page 36) and *THP8* (page 25) show the kind of animation blending we can expect from *PES* on PS3.

PSM2 RECKONS

Let's be honest – the early next-gen screens look a bit 'waxy', but we're sad we're not getting it this year. On the flip side, that's the price of waiting for a genuinely 'next-gen' *Pro Evo*, and at least we've got the PS2 and PSP versions to tide us over.

PSM PRESENTS STARS OF E3 – THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

PSM PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

Format: PS3 Developer: Ubi Soft Publisher: Ubi Soft ETA: Summer

THE ASSASSIN'S

Ever wanted to get really medieval on someone's ass?

Agent 47? What a wimp. Back in the crusades (the heyday of murder) men didn't off their enemies with a high-calibre, scope-topped rifle – they snuck up behind them, then jammed a devious wrist-mounted blade into their throat. Back to basics, see? The real man's way of murderising people.

See the screenshots? It actually looks this good in fact it's even *better* in motion, thanks to the incredibly fluid animation – the developers' previous game, *Prince of Persia*, looks stunted in comparison. More than almost any game at E3, this showcased the true potential of PS3.

Demo highlights include riding a stunningly animated horse like *Shadow Of The Colossus* against a backdrop of jaw-droppingly intricate scenery and rolling plains, shimmying up super high-texture buildings using any nook and cranny you could climb in real-life for a genuinely organic feel, and using the crowd to plan your escape. Post kill, you can create crowd trouble to stall your pursuers, or mingle invisibly with praying monks – you can even collapse scenery to create diversions. The crowds look unbelievable, with unique behaviour patterns, and slick animations.

Plot twist? When our character died, he awoke in a Vanilla Sky-style high-tech hospital, with 'Genetic Line Disrupted' on-screen. "Not all the game's set in 1192," tease the developers.

PSM2 RECKONS

Possibly the best PS3 game at the show – it's that good. Ubisoft's line-up was even stronger than EA's, and this blend of innovative gameplay, jaw-dropping visuals and intriguing plotting was the highlight. We can't wait to see more.

PSM PRESENTS STARS OF E3 THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

GAZE OF THUNDER: The assassin has a special first-person vision mode to spot targets in the crowd.

GATE EXPECTATIONS: This isn't a cut-scene, and the game roars effortlessly from open country to castle.

CREED

THE SETTING

The game's split between three cities, but their purpose is being kept secret to protect the plot. It seems our assassin is answering to a higher noble cause, but Ubisoft won't let on. It could be that you have to erase the bloodline of a modern day evil-doer from history – a bit like a lo-fi Terminator.

Format: PS3 / PS2 Developer: Krome Publisher: Konami ETA: Spring 2007

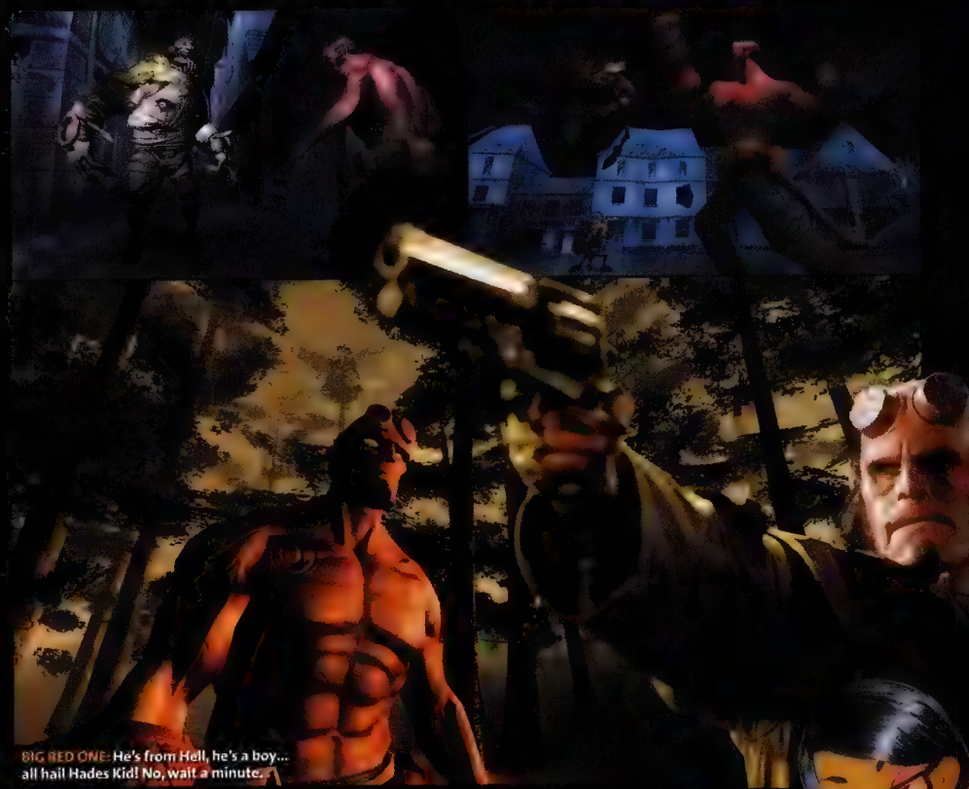
HELLBOY

This brawler requires 'tactical thinking' apparently. Can't we just hit things?

Developed with Hellboy creator Mike Mignola and the director of the movie Guillermo del Toro, this violent scrapper sees the titular hero uncovering a secret Nazi plot to take over the world.

To stop the German swines, Hellboy will be able to use not only his exceptional strength, but also supernatural magic attacks. The 'tactical thinking' the developers have promised will, we suspect, boil down to whether you should punch a man or cast a spell on him.

PSM RECKONS *The film was brainless fun and the comic has a rich heritage that will appease the fans. The game's context sensitive battle system and destructible environments should ensure much chaotic fun is had. Should be good.*



BIG RED ONE: He's from Hell, he's a boy... all hail Hades Kid! No, wait a minute...

Format: PSP Developer: Konami Publisher: Konami ETA: Spring 2007

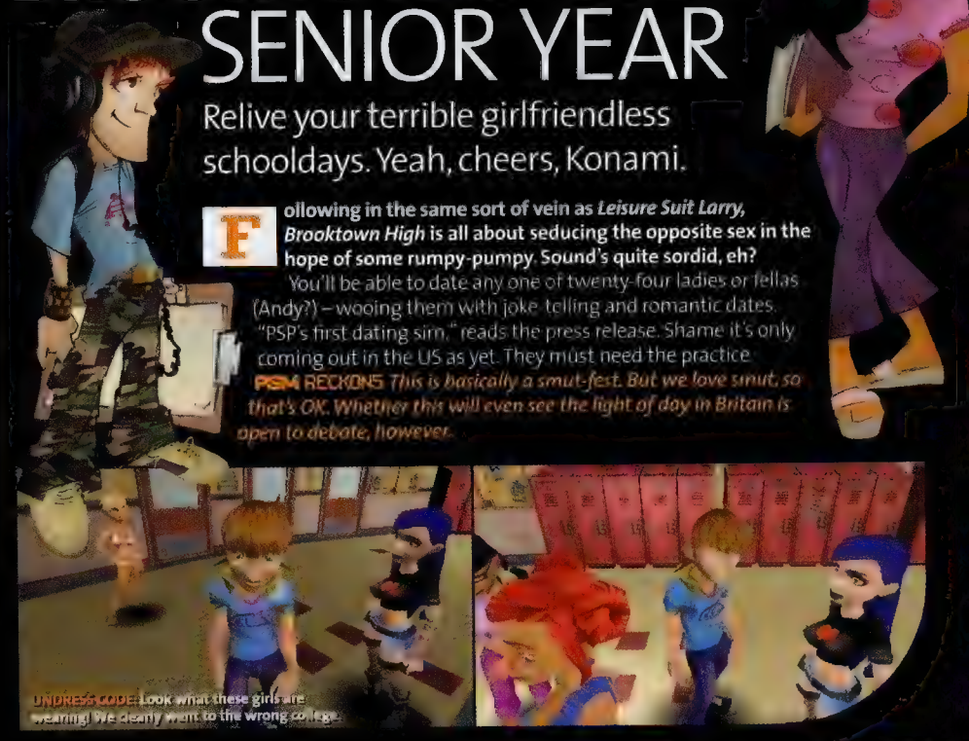
BROOKTOWN HIGH: SENIOR YEAR

Relive your terrible girlfriendless schooldays. Yeah, cheers, Konami.

Following in the same sort of vein as *Leisure Suit Larry*, *Brooktown High* is all about seducing the opposite sex in the hope of some rumpy-pumpy. Sound's quite sordid, eh?

You'll be able to date any one of twenty-four ladies or fellas (Andy?) – wooing them with joke telling and romantic dates. "PSP's first dating sim," reads the press release. Shame it's only coming out in the US as yet. They must need the practice.

PSM RECKONS *This is basically a smut-fest. But we love smut, so that's OK. Whether this will even see the light of day in Britain is open to debate, however.*



UNDRESS CODE: Look what these girls are wearing! We clearly went to the wrong college.

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

SUITED AND BOOTED: These hideous things roam the base. Killing them won't be easy.

LIVE AND LET DIE

One of the most, er, 'interesting' features in *Bioshock* is how you go about getting precious, life-preserving chemicals. What do you have to do? Well, the evil mutant kids feed on corpses and urinate afterwards, expelling the vital liquids you need to survive. So basically, *you drink a child's piss.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Irrational Games Publisher: Take Two Interactive ETA: Early 2007

BIOSHOCK

Water, water, everywhere

Most games force you to make decisions, but not like *Bioshock*. This isn't stereotypical shooting – this is Possibly Dying Vs Killing Small Children For The Drugs They're Carrying. *Bioshock*'s set in a murky undersea world where survival might mean doing bad things and choices are never easy.

If this sounds familiar, you might be thinking of *System Shock 2*, Irrational Games' last cult hit. The developers are adamant that, though it'll offer even more ways to proceed, it'll also be much more user-friendly than the PC kill-em-up... and it'll have the best water physics on PS3. Now *that's* wet and wild.

PSM2 RECKONS

Though we're not sure about shooting toddlers, we've no such moral qualms about chaingun-toting behemoths – so there should be plenty of wanton murder around whatever decisions we make. Hurrah!

ALL IN THE DETAIL: The environments are some of the most realistic we've ever seen.

GUNNING FOR GLORY: There's loads of exploration, but just as much shooting.

Format: PS3 Developer: Activision Publisher: Activision ETA: Winter 2006

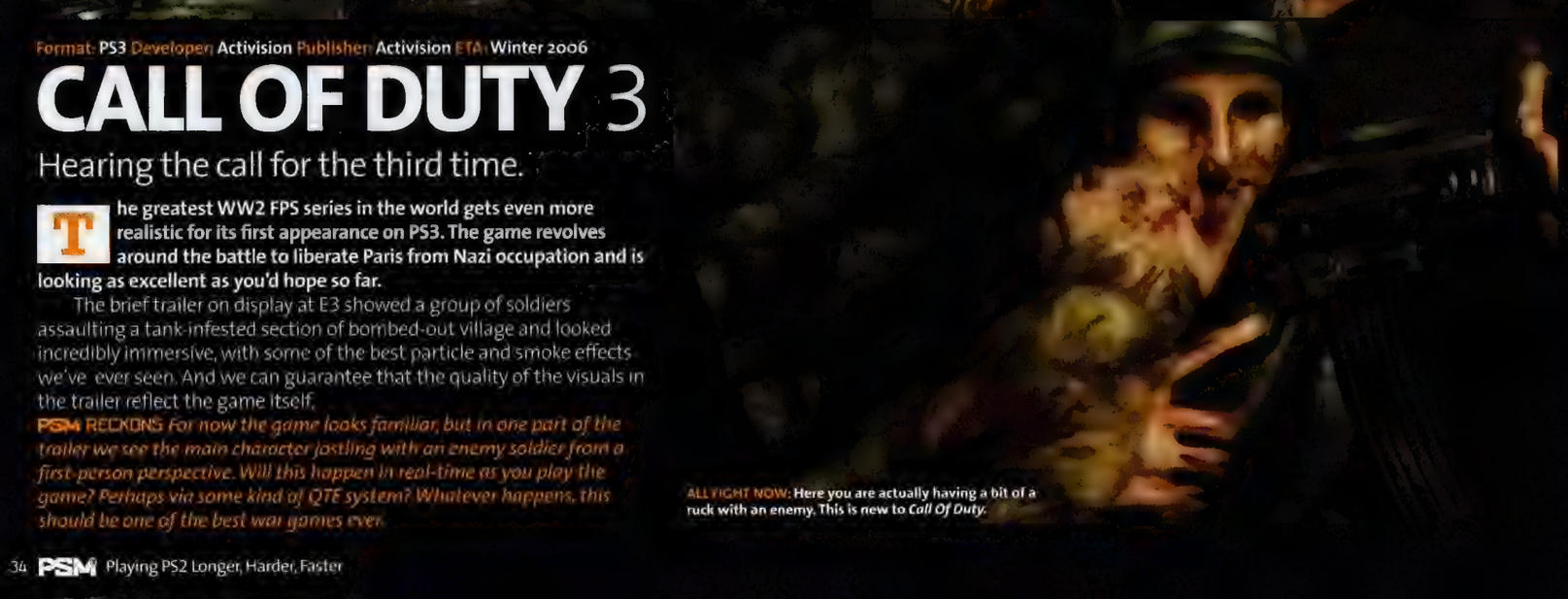
CALL OF DUTY 3

Hearing the call for the third time.

The greatest WW2 FPS series in the world gets even more realistic for its first appearance on PS3. The game revolves around the battle to liberate Paris from Nazi occupation and is looking as excellent as you'd hope so far.

The brief trailer on display at E3 showed a group of soldiers assaulting a tank-infested section of bombed-out village and looked incredibly immersive, with some of the best particle and smoke effects we've ever seen. And we can guarantee that the quality of the visuals in the trailer reflect the game itself.

PSM RECKONS *For now the game looks familiar, but in one part of the trailer we see the main character jostling with an enemy soldier from a first-person perspective. Will this happen in real-time as you play the game? Perhaps via some kind of QTE system? Whatever happens, this should be one of the best war games ever.*

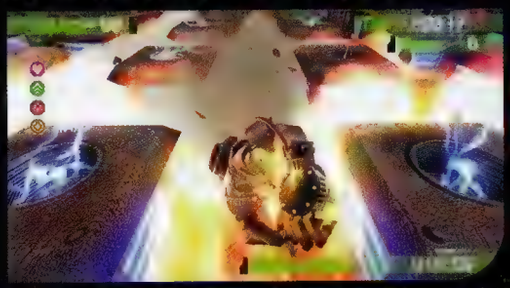


ALL FIGHT NOW: Here you are actually having a bit of a ruck with an enemy. This is new to *Call Of Duty*.

Format: PS3 Publisher: Hudson Developer: Hudson ETA: Winter 2006

BOMBERMAN: ACT ZERO

Despite the huge visual overhaul, *Act Zero* plays very much like classic *Bomberman*. The action is viewed from above, but you now have free control over the camera. Act Zero features a survival mode where you have to get through 99 increasingly difficult levels without losing any lives. But should Bomberman really be all 'adult'?



Format: PS2 Publisher: THQ Developer: Pandemic ETA: Winter 2006

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2

Crypto is back and this time he's terrorising '60s America. Expect loads of crude humour at the expense of hippies and a devastating new weapon that literally tears the limbs off hapless humans. Our only concern is that it looks pretty much almost identical to the last game. Will anything *really* surprise us?

Format: PSP Publisher: Lucasarts Developer: Kuju ETA: Winter 2006

TRAXION

This intriguing PSP title is a rhythm action game that reads MP3 files stored on your memory stick to create levels. It's sort of like the PSone game *Vib Ribbon* in that respect, but it's more mini-game focused, rather than platforming. This is an incredibly clever use of the console and we can't wait to play it.

Format: PS3 Publisher: Codemasters Developer: Codemasters ETA: 2007

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

With every new console comes a slew of rally games and *McRae* always seems to come out on top. Which, ironically, doesn't reflect his actual career which is hit-and-miss at best. You know what to expect from this – amazing damage models, realistic splattering mud a simulation so accurate it could be real.

Format: PS2 Publisher: SquareEnix Developer: Tri-Ace ETA: Sept 2006

VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

This sequel to the popular PSone role-player takes place hundreds of years in the past and features tactical, turn-based RPG combat mixed with side-scrolling exploration sections. Another feature lets you manipulate the environment in real-time during battles using special magical stones. Interesting.

Format: PS2 Publisher: Namco Developer: Grasshopper ETA: 2007

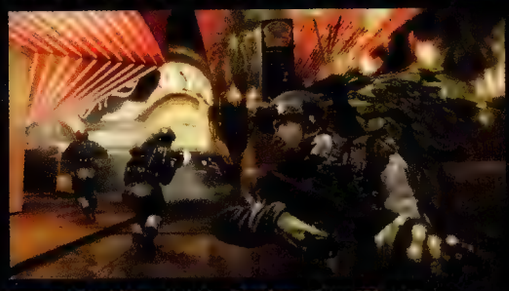
BLOOD + ONE NIGHT KISS

Based on the Blood+ anime series, which itself a TV spin-off of the popular movie *Blood: The Last Vampire*, this dark action game uses the same graphics engine as the bonkers *Killer7*. Suda 51, the lead designer, is known for his surreal visuals and disturbing subject matter. Should be 'interesting'.

Format: PS3 Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Ubisoft ETA: September 2006

RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

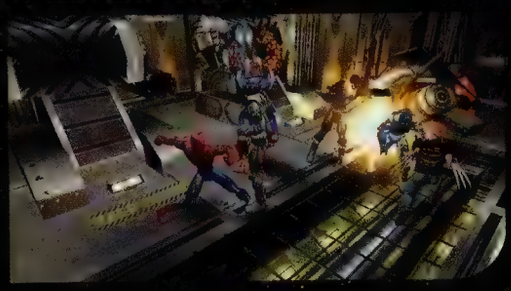
Rainbow Six Vegas is the fifth title in the series and pits players against terrorists who have taken over the city of Las Vegas, Nevada. Gone are the jungles, warehouses and bunkers of yore – you now have to remain stealthy in the loudest, flashiest, brightest city in the world. The setting means that this is instantly a real visual stunner.



Format: PS3 Publisher: Activision Developer: Raven ETA: 2007

MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

Ultimate Alliance is an action RPG that features dozens of famous Marvel characters including Spider-Man, Ghost Rider, Thor, The Thing, Captain America, Blade and Elektra. In a style similar to *X-Men Legends*, these characters can all team up for top-down fighting, exploration and role-playing.



Format: PS3 Publisher: IE Developer: The Collective ETA: 2007

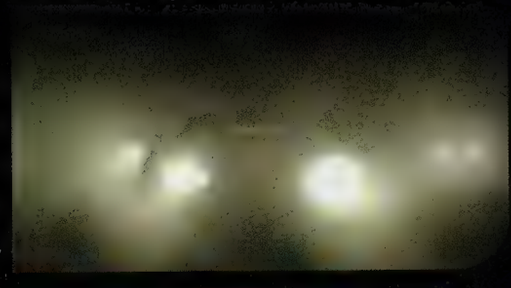
DIRTY HARRY

From the developers of *The Da Vinci Code* and Mark Ecko's *Getting Up* comes this action game based on the classic 1971 film of the same name. But don't expect some half-hearted cash-in – Clint Eastwood himself is lending his voice and likeness to the game, and he's apparently had some creative input. Respect due.

Format: PS3 Publisher: EA Developer: EA ETA: 2007

NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON

EA are keeping this strangely quiet, which is a real disappointment. All that was shown was an incredibly brief trailer at the Sony conference and a similarly short one at their booth on the show floor. We can't really gauge anything from the name either. What do they mean 'carbon'? Perhaps it's just French for 'good car'...



Format: PS3 Publisher: N/A Developer: N/A ETA: 2007

AFRIKA

This odd 'un was shown at the Sony press conference and baffled absolutely everyone. The trailer showed a painstakingly-recreated section of the African Serengeti, which was populated by amazingly realistic animals including rhinos and giraffes. Could it be a hunting sim? Surely not? A photography game, maybe?

Format: PS3 Publisher: SCEA Developer: Factor 5 ETA: 2007

LAIR

Dragons battle to the death in *Lair*, a PS3 game developed by Factor 5. Riding atop the great beasts, soldiers also fight with weapons as they fly past their enemy. The footage shown at E3 looked almost too good to be true, but we're assured that it's all in-game stuff. We'll believe it when we see it.

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TRAM-TASTIC

The best example of the 'Euphoria' engine seen yet sees Indy perched on top of a tram. Enemies clamber on top, trying to chuck Indy off, while others hurtle afterwards in cars. We're told that it'll play differently each time you try it – we once got thrown off the tram and then run over by a motor...

Format: PS3 Developer: Lucasarts Publisher: Activision ETA: Late 2007

INDIANA JONES

No time for love, Dr Jones – you've an awful lot of men to throw through windows...

No, there's no official title yet – but the good news is that's because this game's based on a 'large chunk' of the script from the upcoming fourth Indy film and Lucasarts don't want to give anything away. The demo was based in Chinatown, but that's all we can say.

The real treasure in Indy, though, is what the developers are calling the 'Euphoria' engine. In the demo we way it looks like a good ragdoll physics system, but it's more than that – there are no preset animations in the game, so everything the enemies do is a response to their surroundings. Knock them over and they'll prop themselves up against whatever's to hand. Shake them and they'll try to keep their balance. Blow them through the air, and they'll cling to fire escapes to stop themselves plummeting. The AI means they're constantly making decisions about how best to preserve themselves – short of not attacking Indy – and Lucasarts claim things like arm strength and intelligence of individual enemies will determine whether they can manage jumps or avoid attacks. Whether this means the game's one long punch-up is open to question, but it's looking cool.

PSM2 RECKONS

A lot of next-gen games are looking pretty and cramming loads of characters on-screen, but this is one of the few to be genuinely innovative in the way it *feels*. If everybody isn't using this sort of technology in five years, we'll want to know why.

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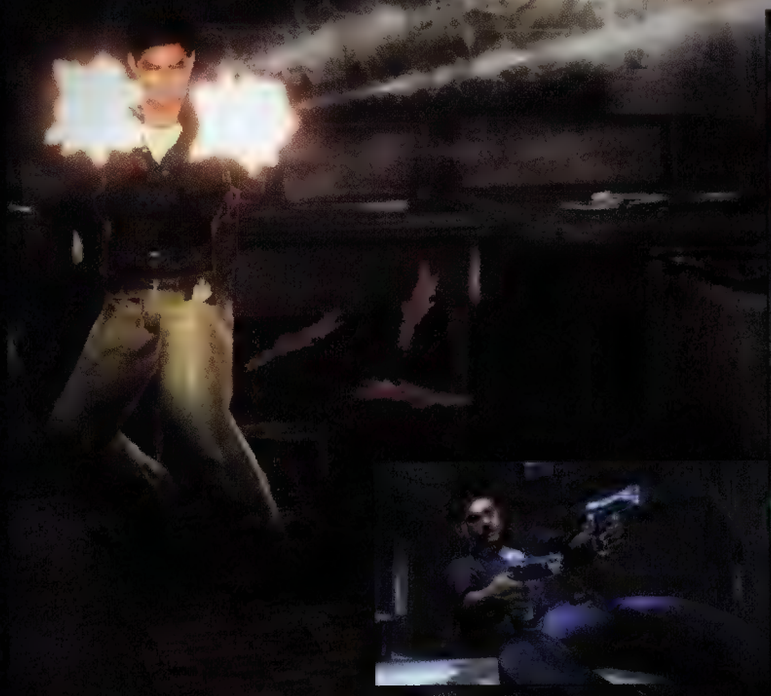
ENJOY THIS WHIP – It wouldn't be Indy without a trusy bullwhip weapon.

DON'T TAKE OF FENCE – Do this again, and the bad guy might take a completely different fall.

Format: PS3 Developer: Midway Publisher: Midway ETA: Christmas 2006

STRANGLEHOLD

Blamblamblamblamblamblam! And 'blam'!



The big news about John Woo's first go at videogames is how slick the controls feel. Instead of faffing about with an elaborate, button-intensive setup, Midway have gone for simplicity.

Context-sensitivity means that Chow Yun Fat will jump or slide over most obstacles automatically, while trickier moves like leaping and grabbing chandeliers are handled with a prod of L1. This means it's easy to focus on gunplay – which is crucial, because the more stylish you get, the quicker you build up the 'Tequila Bomb' – a spin-around-and-shoot-everyone move that even makes Neo look a bit trumpy.

PSM RECKONS *We had our reservations, but Midway have soothed our fears. See that, other developers? Don't mess about with jumping puzzles when we should be shooting things.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Eden Studios Publisher: Atari ETA: Winter 2006

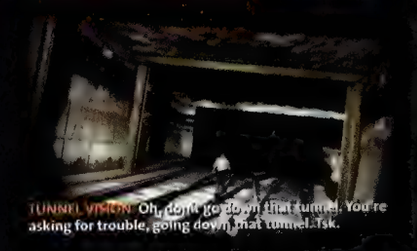
ALONE IN THE DARK

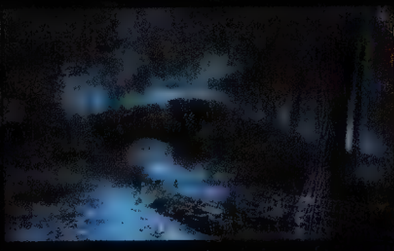
Of course, if you were *really* alone, there wouldn't be anything to be scared of...

Though there wasn't much melee combat or shooting on display from Edward Carnby's latest brush with the supernatural, there was plenty of behind-closed doors atmosphere.

An edited version of the game's opening sees you behind the pupils of a blurry, kidnapped Carnby in an on rails bit of scene setting – think *Half-Life* before his captors fall foul of mysterious spirits and the game switches to more familiar third person action. Glimpses of later puzzles show him shooting through bits of scenery – the team cite *Resi 4* as a heavy influence – and even hotwiring cars.

PSM RECKONS AITD's *fallen behind in the survival horror stakes, but this latest episode's got the potential to impress. Let's hope it keeps it up...*





TUNNEL VISION Oh, don't go down that tunnel. You're asking for trouble, going down that tunnel. Tsk.

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Format: PS3 Developer: Sega Publisher: Sega ETA: Summer 2007

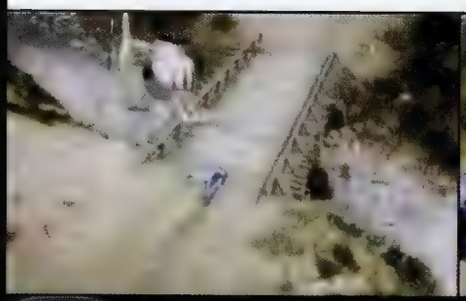
SEGA RALLY REVO

One of the best racers handbrakes into the next-gen.

Looking like a high-res version of its PS2 brethren, *Sega Rally Revo* displays the usual traits of next-gen games – for example, the particle effects tearing up the track, leaving permanent grooves in the environment.

The early demo we saw easily rivals the visuals of *Motor Storm* and looks set to offer an arcade style alternative to the seriousness of *Colin McRae*. We're looking forward to throwing a few Subaru's around the track and with promise of a minimum eight players online, *Sega Rally Revo* looks like it could better the slightly disappointing PS2 incarnation.

PSM RECKONS *This was running on a PS3 (read: dev kit) and it looked lovely, but at such an early point in development it was rather jerky in areas.*



Format: PS3 Developer: Sega AM2 Publisher: Sega ETA: November 2007

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

We'll take the monkey-lady in a fez, please...

Huge in Japan, *Virtua Fighter* traditionally takes a back seat to *Tekken* over here – but Sega have covered all the bases this year for what looks like a breakthrough in *VF*.

For finger-calloused mentalists, a new sidestep move and more balanced play offers a multitude of new fighting strategies to master. For more shallow types, there's a lucha libre fighter called El Blaze and a monkey kung-fu scrapper named Eileen. Erm. And there's an improved online mode and a new selection of optional headwear. Oh, yes.

PSM RECKONS *With a poor showing from Tekken and no sign of Soul Calibur making a return, this might be the year we invest enough time to get seriously good at VF. With the drunken old man character, obviously.*

Format: PS3 Developer: SCE London Studios Publisher: Sony ETA: Summer 2007

EIGHT DAYS

The game formerly known as *'Exploding Gas Station Project'* gets a somewhat catchier title...

Undisputed jaw-dislocator of Sony's presentation was this: the 'Exploding Gas Station' and 'Shot Up Car' tech demos from the Games Developers' Conference seamlessly blended into two minutes of hyperventilatingly exciting violence. And yes, it looks astonishing – the heat time signature simulation and real-time bullet deformation are one thing, but the real face-slapper is the animation. From the way the lead characters run and take cover to cars cartwheeling through the air as they crash, it looks almost... well, *unbelievable*.

The thing is, on closer, non-jetlagged inspection, there's something a tiny bit suspicious about *Eight Days*. How will it actually work? How interactive are set-pieces like the enormous oil tanker plowing through the café as you dive out of a window? And, most importantly, have Sony just slapped an ammo counter onto some CG footage to make it look like gameplay? We'll see.

PSM2 RECKONS

We're optimistically inclined to call the *Eight Days* trailer 'target footage' – if Sony can make it real, it'll be an absolute gob-dropper. At the moment, however, it really does look too good to be true. More very soon, we should think.

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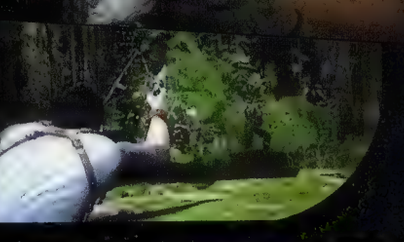

Format: PS3 Developer: Naughty Dog Publisher: Sony ETA: Autumn 2007

NAUGHTY DOG'S 'TOMB RAIDER'

Clothes – Gap. Attitude – Lara Croft. Moves – model's own.

Look at it on a static screen, and Naughty Dog's unnamed PS3 project looks chucklesomely ill-judged. Lara Croft male rip-off dressed like an Abercrombie and Fitch model scampers round the jungle? "Hunter becomes the hunted?" Yeah, whatever.

See it in motion, though, and the fashion critiques quickly fade. The strongman preppie's clearly got a few good moves up his sleeve than his Croft, including shooting at acrobangles from a ledge, rope-swinging, trips, punches, kicks and pistol-whips. On top of that, he's got the grace of a bastered monkey – he flinches as bullets ricochet around him. Aping for his grip on walls and flows between moves effortlessly. At the moment, of course, it's questionable whether any of this is really in-game footage, and with the sky-high of the hero it should be more than Croft is [illegible]

PSM2 RECKONS

Naughty Dog are so good at making games that we can't help but be excited about this departure from their usual cutesy fare, despite the fact we don't like Croft blokey much at all. Early prediction: dreadful plot, excellent game. Mark our words.

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STARS OF E3

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LIZARD OF OZ

Despite the gritty setting for the game (post apocalyptic London) we found the alien lizards with lasers we had to fight against slightly laughable. After the vein-popping brutality of *Call Of Duty* and the like, shooting a sci-fi rubber-suited man armed with a zappy gun felt a little underwhelming.

Format: PS3 Developer: Insomniac Publisher: Sony ETA: November

RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

With more hideous mutants than the Big Brother house.

The year is 1951. The good news is, World War 2 never happened. The bad news is, that's because the Earth's been invaded by Chimeras, a strain of mutant that propagates its species by turning lifeforms into freakish, tube-backed monsters. As the title suggests, you're part of the human resistance.

As its from the people behind *Ratchet And Clank*, you'd expect an impressive arsenal – and Insomniac aren't about to disappoint. Our early favourite's the 'tagger' – a machine gun that allows you to mark a target with a single shot, then fire a swarm of bullets that'll home in on the tag. There's also a shotgun, the Auger (bullets bore through walls, then speed up on the other side) and spike-studded air-bursting grenades (nasty). And, of course, there's plenty of stuff to blow apart, with windows, bottles and other assorted glassware shattering with that satisfying tinkle we're starting to associate with next-gen.

PSM2 RECKONS

With lots of gameplay modes – including Co-op, split-screen and 32-player online deathmatch options – this could well be an early front-runner for FPS glory on PlayStation 3. More on this very soon indeed, we hope.

Format: PS3 Developer: Buena Vista Publisher: Buena Vista ETA: Summer 2007

TUROK

Like the Flintstones, only much, much more violent.

After the collapse of Acclaim and a PS2 incarnation – *Turok Evolution* – that was a steaming pile of raptor chutney, *Turok* looked like it had gone the way of the dinosaurs. But, like an insect in the gaming amber, it's about to be revived – and Propaganda Games are set to play the part of Dickie Attenborough.

Based on a radically updated version of the Unreal 3 engine, *Turok*'s a first-person shooter with everything from bows to railguns in its kitbag. The main enemies are human, but the dinosaurs are still out in force, roaming the jungle and eating anyone stupid enough to annoy them – which also, obviously, means that you'll be able to use them for a tactical advantage. Nice dino...

PSM RECKONS *We thought dinosaurs were a bit old hat, but King Kong's screen-rattling T-rex moments almost proved us wrong. If* Turok *can match that with some smart storytelling and brutal first-person action, it might manage to escape extinction for a while longer yet. We're already shouting "I! Am! TUROK!" every five minutes in preperation.*

Format: PS2/PSP Developer: Midway Publisher: Midway ETA: Autumn

MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON

Finish him! Look will somone *please* finish him.

Hands up if you remember Noob Saibot? Kabal? Fujin? Shinnok? Well, you're in luck, Mr Obsessive, because they're all going to be in *Armageddon*, along with every other character ever from all of the *Mortal Kombat* games. The whole troop will be fighting for Outworld's fate in a one-on-one fighter with adventure elements that sees a return to the gameplay style of *Deadly Alliance*.

You'll also be able to play 3D *Mortal Kombat* on PSP in *MK: Unchained*, a sort of director's cut version of 2004's *MK: Deception*. But the best news? Along with the Create-A-Character system, *Armageddon* offers the opportunity to craft your own unpleasant methods of murder in create-a-fatality mode. We'll have a cut-off-their-hands-and-stuff-them-up-their-ass move, please. Ta.

PSM RECKONS *We're sort of excited, but can't help feeling that the exhaustive roster's come at the expense of graphical quality – and the Create-A-Fighter characters look like Blue Peter competition entries. Please be good,* Mortal Kombat. *Please.*

Format: PSP Developer: zSlide Publisher: Atari ETA: Christmas 2006

HOT PXL

200 games in one? It *sounds* like good value...

Twitchy? Irritable? Attention span irreversibly damaged by fizzy pop and MTV? Then Atari have got just the thing – 200 'street-culture-themed' minigames, designed to be played in rapid-fire succession and supplemented with ten boss battles.

Challenges range from Zaxxon and skateboarding to stage diving and, erm, 'crossing the road.' Run out of ideas there, zSlide?

PSM RECKONS *Well, it's clearly a ripoff of DS's* Wario Ware, *but that's no bad thing – if it manages the same manic intensity, we'll be twitching our way around the Bakerloo line in no time.*

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Format: PSP Developer: Climax Studios Publisher: Konami Games ETA: Winter 2006

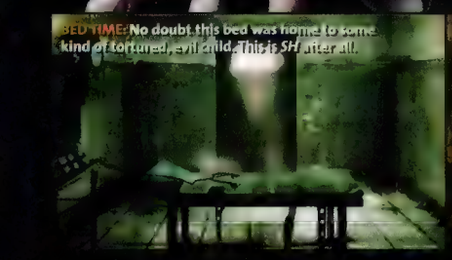
SILENT HILL ORIGINS

The most horrible thing we've ever found in our pockets.

After speculation that the *Hill*'s first outing on PSP would be a remake of the original *Silent Hill*, prepare to be pleasantly surprised – not only is this a new game with new areas and monsters, but even the gameplay offers new features.

After trucker Travis O'Grady's lured off the road by an apparition, he finds himself in the Hill confronting monsters – but he can use his meaty arms to drag furniture and barricade doors. With a closer camera – designed to let you see more detail on the PSP screen – and a story and score created by the original *Hill* team, it's clear that Konami are taking this one seriously. Let's hope it makes up for the not too great film.

PSM RECKONS *As a game best played with the lights off and the sound up, Silent Hill doesn't seem best suited to handheld – it's unlikely to deliver its trademark emotional resonance on a crowded bus. Then again, you could always play it under the duvet.*



BED TIME: No doubt this bed was home to some kind of tortured, evil child. This is *SH* after all.

DOCTOR EVIL: We're almost certain that this pulsating maggot thing is a monster.

COOK REPORT: This is, literally, the *scariest* kitchen we've ever seen. <shiver>

Format: PS3 Developer: Sega Publisher: Sega ETA: Spring 2007

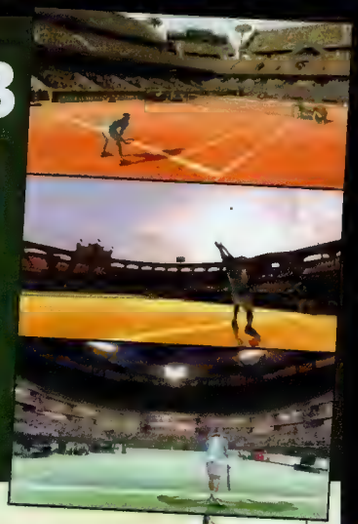
VIRTUA TENNIS 3

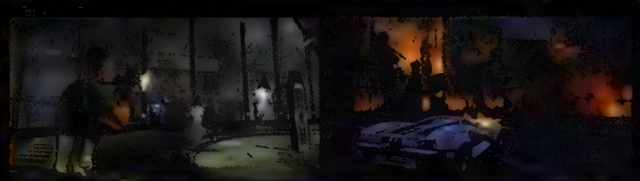
Holding court on PlayStation 3.

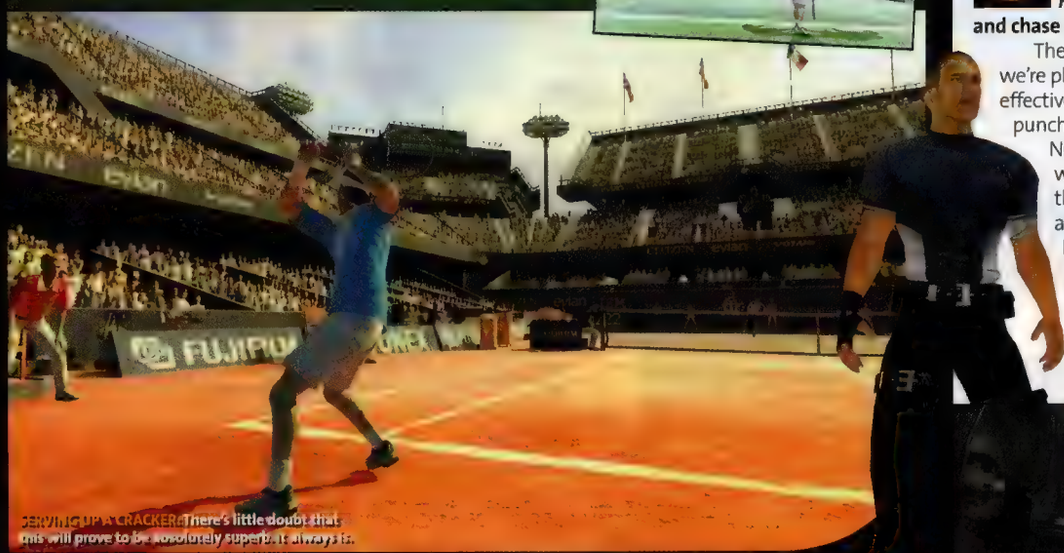
Although any new Virtua Tennis is welcomed with a (firm and manly) hug round these here parts, it's hard not to feel a teensy bit disappointed with *VT3* so far – sure, it's all in Hi-Def, but other than that, you'd be hard-pushed to tell it was a next-gen game.

The only time you can see it's a PS3 game, really, is between points when it cuts to close-ups of your players and you can see every crease and wrinkle. They're amazingly realistic-looking. Shame that Kournikova no longer plays, then.

PSM RECKONS *OK, it's no great advancement – but it is still Virtua Tennis, so it will be utterly great. Feel OK, that's got*







SERVING UP A CRACKER: There's little doubt that this will prove to be absolutely superb. It always is.

Format: PS2 Developer: Midway Publisher: Midway ETA: Autumn 2006

SPY HUNTER NOWHERE TO RUN

Can it be good this time, please?

OK, so the title's misleading – there are actually plenty of places to run, since this is the first *Spy Hunter* game that'll let you leave your Interceptor and chase spies on foot.

The driving and boating hasn't changed much, but we're pleased to report that the fighting's simple and effective, with Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson happily punching, suplexing and choke-slamming hordes of NOSTRA agents, then occasionally tossing one into a wall or a fish tank. He's also recorded dialogue for the game, so you'll be able to thrill to him talking about what he's cooking – or something – in between shooting people.

PSM RECKONS *This one's looking a bit B-list, but it's certain to be dumb, no-brainer fun. And anyone brave enough to glue ping-pong balls to a wrestler – as happened for the motion-capture process here – has our respect.*

PSM2 RECKONS

We enjoyed *Mercenaries* on PS2 a lot, but with promises like 'shadows for every bullet', *World In Flames* almost sounds *too* ambitious – but if it can deliver on half of its promises, it'll be astounding. One to watch out for.

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BURN, BABY, BURN

This time around – as the subtitle suggests – you'll be able to have all sorts of fun with fire. Torch a building and watch as the flames lick adjacent buildings and objects – setting them wildly ablaze too. Plus, we're expecting seriously damaged abodes and cities to remain smouldering throughout. Perfect for frustrated arsonists everywhere.

Format: PS3 Developer: Pandemic Studios Publisher: Activision ETA: Summer 2007

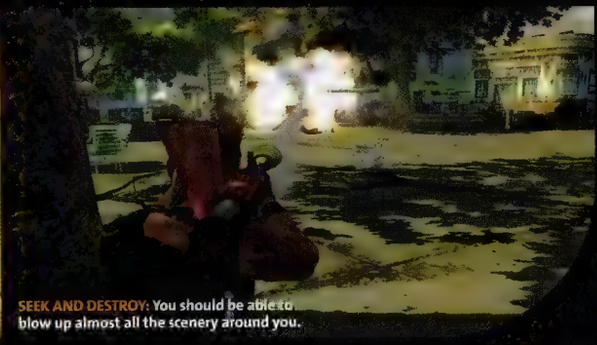
MERCENARIES

Do *anything* you want – as long as you've got the cash...

Pop quiz, hotshot: there's a Venezuelan drug dealer in the heart of enemy territory. Do you nick a car and try to sneak in, incurring the wrath of the people you've stolen it from and risking a shootout? Try to take him alive for a reward? Or abandon all subtlety and call in an airstrike to topple a skyscraper onto his head?

Mercenaries always felt like a next-gen game in-waiting, massively ambitious but hampered by the PS2 – so it's arguably only in this sequel – subtitled *World In Flames* – that we're getting the game Pandemic always wanted to make. This time, the action switches to Venezuela, and though the Deck Of Cards has been ditched, the 'capture or kill' dynamic and factional play have been made more accessible and easy to understand. What's new is what Pandemic call 'general purpose mechanics' – the fact that everything in the environment should be interactive on a much higher level than ever before. Leaking fuel can be ignited to trigger explosions, car windows can be shot out without damaging the rest of the vehicle and buildings will explode in new and exciting ways. You'll be able to 'jack planes, boats and – although this'll be stretching the mercenaries' new swimming abilities a bit – submarines. And, best of all, there's finally going to be co-operative play – with special wrestling-for-control minigames for when someone tries to steal your jeep. Hey, they can buy their own.

"CALL IN AN AIRSTRIKE TO TOPPLE A SKYSCRAPER ON AN ENEMY'S HEAD"



SEEK AND DESTROY: You should be able to blow up almost all the scenery around you.

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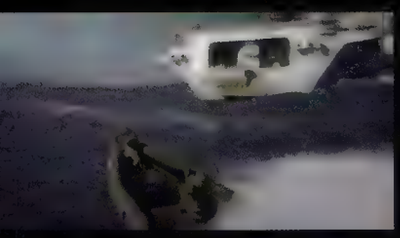
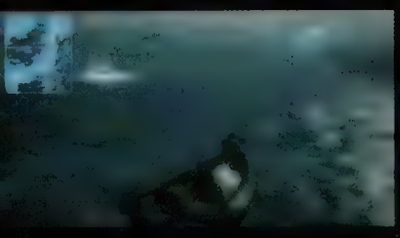
Format: PS3 Developer: Electronic Arts Publisher: Electronic Arts ETA: 2007

ARMY OF TWO

Don't worry, soldier – you're not alone any more... in EA's best original game for years.





Ever been taking on a murderous drug baron with nobody to watch your six when you've got a bit... lonely? Well, this is the game for you. Where most games include co-operative play as an afterthought, *Army Of Two* sees you and a virtual friend killing terrorists side by side in a set of missions specifically designed with partners in mind.

The E3 demo kicks off with two mercenaries sharing a parachute. Suddenly, the screen splits vertically, leaving one to steer, and one to snipe. In our demo, players literally barked commands at each other through a headset, creating a real buddy-buddy feel. They land into a blazing clifftop warzone. "Go back to back!" barks one player, as they combine and blast their way into a cave network. The demo then highlights a series of two-player activities; using a forklift to raise your buddy above obstacles to shoot foes below, giving one player a 'boost' onto a platform, then pulling the other up, and a unique CPR mode when a player 'dies' – one has to run away from the light in an icon on the top left, while the other literally pumps his chest.

In the best scene, the mercs attack an aircraft carrier, piloting a speedboat over *incredible* roaring next-gen waves (huge polygon constructions tickled by moonlight). After a brief shootout, the scene cuts to the deck of a sinking ship, which is rapidly inclining to the vertical as one player frantically dodges rolling barrels and debris. "Get me out of here!" he cries, as a *jet fighter* rolls down the deck – all in real-time – as his buddy flies in to save him in a chopper just in the nick of time.

Expect unrivalled weapon mods, with a range of scopes, silencers, barrels and the like, so online rivals know how good you are by sight alone. There's online and side-by-side co-op, while single players get an AI assisted buddy. It's beautiful, exciting and innovative – and a contender for game of the show.

"BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING, INNOVATIVE AND A CONTENDER FOR GAME OF THE SHOW"

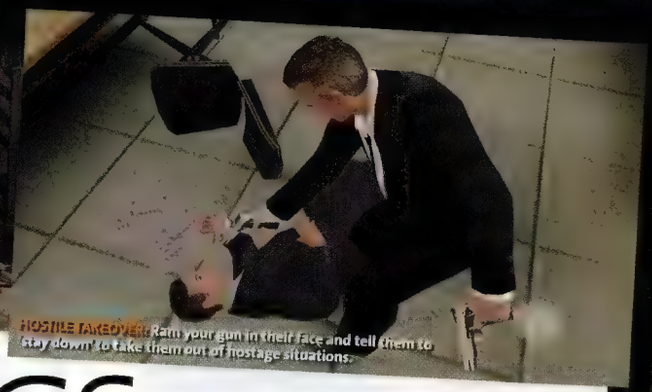
MURDER AND SKULLY: They're not zombies or anything, those are just masks – hulking mercs lurk underneath.

TRASH TALK

It's hard to tell how 'scripted' our E3 demo was, or how precise the headset commands are when playing with an AI partner, but in one section the players traded dynamic insults. "On my mark," whispered one. "No, on *mine*," retorted the other. "Last time you really f*ck*d it up." Incredible.

PSM2 RECKONS

Make no mistake – this is all about the AI. If the single-player game can replicate the promise of playing with a live partner, this could be incredible. Visually, it's better than *Splinter Cell* on Xbox 360, but with *Mercenaries'* gung-ho feel. More soon.



HOSTILE TAKEOVER: Ram your gun in their face and tell them to 'stay down' to take them out of hostage situations.

Format: PS2 Developer: Volatile Publisher: Eidos ETA: August 2006

RESERVOIR DOGS

Hang on, isn't this game 14 years too late?

Eidos' long-awaited conversion of Tarantino's cult heist movie doesn't do a lot *wrong*, but in the next-gen context, looks staggeringly average.

The driving sections are sort-of a match for those of *Driver: Parallel Lines*, and we like the way that you can force hostages to lie down with couple of pistol whips and a few harsh words. But when the on-foot action kicks-in, its a generic third-person shooter. The average *GTA*-player was barely born when Reservoir Dogs rocked cinemas, and it's far too generic for cult appeal among older gamers. The cut-scenes need the most work – we only realised we were watching Harvey Kietel and Tim Roth when Roth got shot in the infamous car-jacking scene.

PSM RECKONS *Why now? Who knows. The on-foot action is competent and the car sections look promising. But we're worried that this will be just another generic shooter with little exciting or new to recommend it. An ear-slicing minigame? Not on this evidence. Still, we'll wait and see how it turns out, and if the fractured game structure works.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Avalanche Publisher: Eidos ETA: Early 2007

JUST CAUSE

'Cos even *GTA* hasn't done para-sailing.

How do you make a *GTA* clone where you can murder whoever you like and still sort of stay on the good guys' side? Easy – by setting it in a drug-ravaged tropical island governed by a crooked dictatorship.

You'll play Rico Rodriguez, a CIA agent tasked with overthrowing the drug dealers, which you'll do by bombing about in cars, on boats and in planes, shooting lots of people. Best of all, though, Rico packs a parachute/grappling-hook combo that allows him to latch onto vehicles and hitch along for an airborne ride, shooting people as he goes.

PSM RECKONS *It's a gimmick-stuffed ripoff, sure – but so was* Total Overdose, *and that was brilliant. We'll see what else Avalanche can bring to the table soon.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Koei Publisher: Koei ETA: November 2007

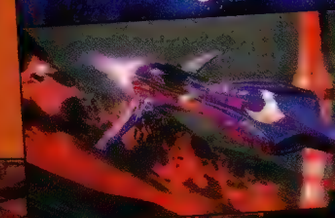
FATAL INTERTIA

If only they allowed catapults in F1...

We've seen this gadget-combat racer before, but that time we were focused on the weapons – big nets and catapults designed for twanging the opposition into walls make a nice change from machine guns.

On the show floor, we got the chance to see some of the different environments available – as well as a podrace-style canyon, there's a lava planet and a jungle with properly deformable trees. The only disappointment – Koei won't say whether they've made use of the PS3 pad's tilt-sensing technology – which suggests that they haven't

PSM RECKONS *Nice to see something from Koei that's not* Dynasty Warriors, *but it's too early to say whether this can become the new* Wipeout. *Oddly, the gadgets and rocky setting sort of remind us of Road Runner. Which is good thing, we think.*



TILTED AT THE ALTAR: We're really hoping this does end up making use of the tilt-sensitive controller.

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CROWD HAILER: These crowd shots look impressive but close up they're not much better than old PS2 GT4.

Format: PS3 Developer: 2KGames Publisher: 2K Games ETA: Early 2007

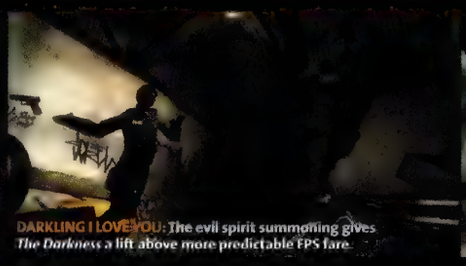
THE DARKNESS

We believe in a thing called... horror.

Just another first-person shooter? Yes – except that you've got big shadowy tentacles that you can use to strangle guards, murder people through locked doors and turn off lights.

Oh, and you can summon malevolent little beasts called Darklings out of the corpses of evil people, then use them to murder other evil people. It's probably also worth pointing out that in the comic version – created by Preacher/Punisher scribe Garth Ennis – main character Jackie Estacado will die instantly if he impregnates a lady. But we can't see that coming up during the game. Although we really hope it does.

PSM RECKONS *Flashy graphics aside, the best thing about this was the technology used to stream real TV shows onto an in-game telly. That could be novelty value only, though.*



DARKLING I LOVE YOU: The evil spirit summoning gives *The Darkness* a lift above more predictable FPS fare.

Format: PS3 Developer: London Studios Publisher: Sony ETA: Early 2007

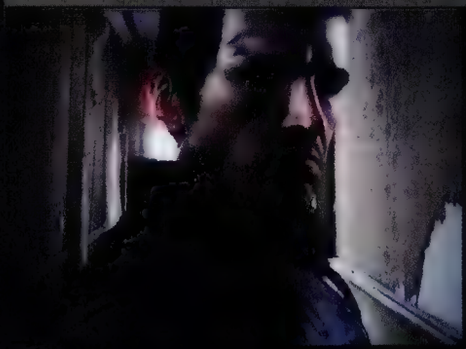
THE GETAWAY

Three games in and they *still* haven't got away...

It's still set in London. The protagonist looks a bit like *Mr Grand Theft Auto 3*. And... that's it.

The trailer we saw shows the camera pulling back from a crowded street to reveal a house, a corpse, an armed man and a disconnected phone – and there's not much else to say about *The Getaway*. The facial detailing could have been in-game, but the camerawork definitely wasn't. Stay tuned.

PSM RECKONS *They've got London right. They've got the faces right. They just need to get the shooting and health system right and we'll be happy. Will they? We'll see.*

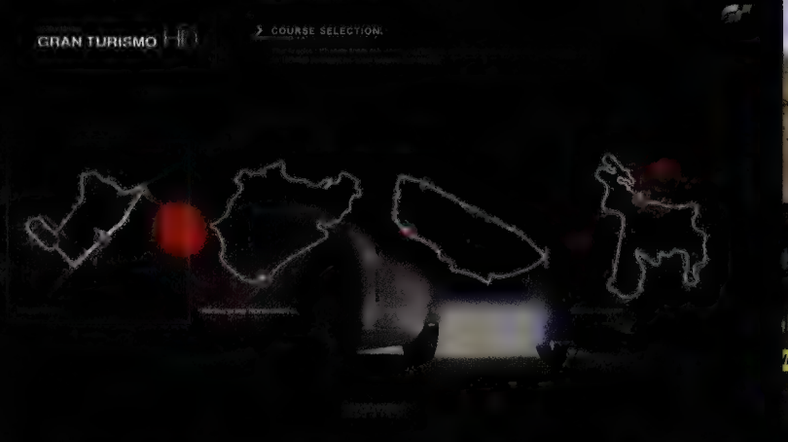


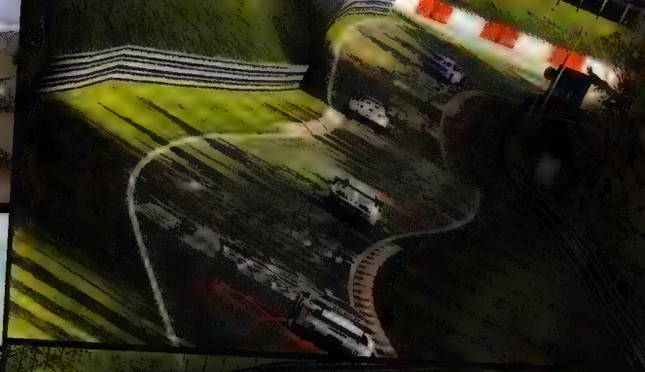
Format: PS3 Developer: Polyphony Digital Publisher: Sony ETA: Winter 2006

GRAN

HI-DEF DEBATE

One thing is for certain. Sony have a hi-def fixation at the moment and are adamant that they're going to prove that PS3 can go 'higher' than Xbox 360 and that the seemingly impossible resolution of 1080p is possible on PS3. They said it couldn't be done but it can with *GTHD*. And at 60fps too. Amazing.



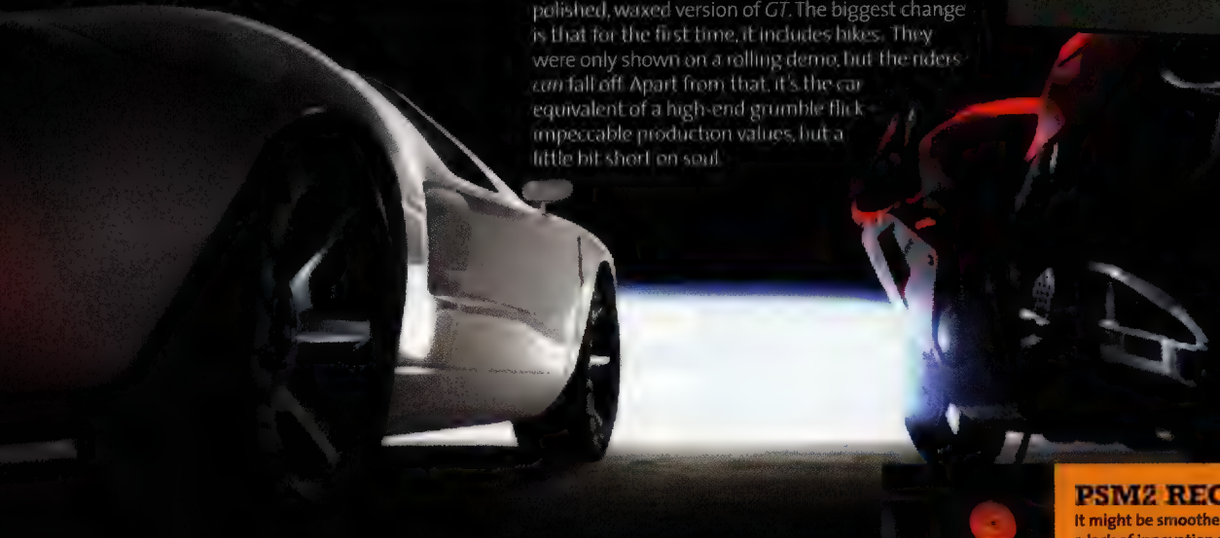


TURISMO HD

Now with guns and ejector seats! No, only joking.

Technical sorcery first: Sony obviously decided to lead their E3 press conference with *Gran Turismo* because it looks *lovely*. Lovely to the tune of 1920x1080p, which knocks anything the Xbox 360 can manage – a piffling 720p – into a caveman-shaped hat. Of course, it's difficult to actually *see* the difference, but as a technical achievement – some Luddites suggested games simply couldn't be done in such high resolution – it's a gleaming testament to the power of PlayStation 3.

So what's the bad news? Yes, the opposition's as clueless as ever about overtaking – they still stick religiously to the racing line even when stuck behind another car. There still isn't any vehicular damage – cars are as pristine after a race as at the start. And it isn't really a proper sequel – Polyphony are reusing old car data, so it's more like a shiny, polished, waxed version of *GT*. The biggest change is that for the first time, it includes bikes. They were only shown on a rolling demo, but the riders *can* fall off. Apart from that, it's the car equivalent of a high-end grumble flick – impeccable production values, but a little bit short on soul.



PSM2 RECKONS

It might be smoother than an aluminium baby, but a lack of innovation means this *GT* just doesn't show the leap in quality we saw between PSone and PS2 – something underlined by Sony showing all three in rapid succession at their presentation.

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GT4 PLAY: Looks familiar? Anyone who's played GT4 will be right at home. This is the same – but higher res.

RALLY GOOD: The new hi-res shots of the Grand Canyon were a highlight of the demo.

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Format: PS3 Developer: Square Enix Publisher: Square Enix ETA: Spring 2007

FINAL FANTASY XIII

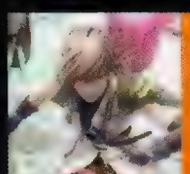
The thirteenth *Final Fantasy* looks set to be very lucky for all of us.

In what was easily one of the most impressive demos of the show, *Final Fantasy XIII* exploded into life during Sony's E3 conference and, assuming that we were being treated to in-game footage, really showed off the PS3 hardware. The teaser features a nameless blonde performing amazing Matrix-style acrobatics in a firefight with a group of yellow jumpsuit-wearing soldiers. During the battle, her rifle transforms stylishly into a sword (which reminds us of Squall's gunblade from *FFVIII*) and she casts a fireball spell that knocks out an entire group of enemies. There's a HUD on the screen that's very similar to the one in *Final Fantasy X-2*, as is the combat style of the lead character. It's classic *FF* stuff and Tetsuya Nomura's distinctive design style remains as strong as ever.

Other scenes show our heroine facing up to a huge robot with a glowing core and a futuristic train on a twisting track being besieged by flying squid-like robots, which again is all very Matrix. After the last game's traditional fantasy setting, it seems that Square Enix are going for something much more contemporary, which makes sense in that it's the game's first outing on a next-gen console. It also seems a lot more action-orientated with plenty of combo-heavy combat.

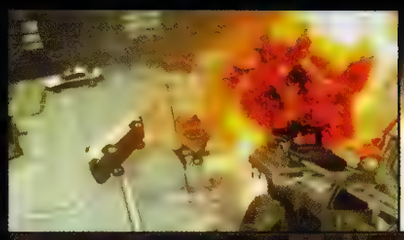
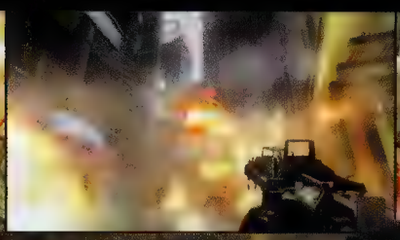
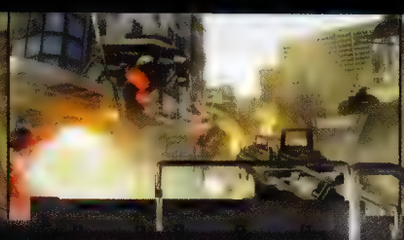
FINAL FANTASY VERSUS XIII

As well as a rubbish mobile phone game that we'll never play, Squenix also revealed *another* PS3 game based on the *FFXIII* universe called, mysteriously, *Final Fantasy Versus XIII*. They basically said nothing about what this actually is, but we predict some kind of online game using PlayStation 3's new network abilities. Alternatively, it could be an *FFX-2*-style spin-off or semi-sequel. We all know how much Square Enix love spin-offs, what with *Dirge Of Cerberus* and the like.



PSM2 RECKONS

The level of detail in the world makes the game look almost as good as the cut-scenes Square Enix are famed for. Are we worried that it's going to turn into an action game? Well, a little, but we're keeping the faith. This should be brilliant.

Format: PS3 Developer: Konami Publisher: Konami ETA: Early 2006

CODED ARMS ASSAULT

Because even in Virtual Reality, there are things that need killing...

A cyber-hacker machine-gunning her way through a virtual world? Bug-like robots? Lots and lots of guns? It all sounds a bit Matrix (again), but *Assault* – making its way to PS3 after a successful PSP debut makes the agents look positively friendly.

Running on the Unreal Engine, the extended *Coded Arms* trailer shown at the Konami conference showed the nameless heroine battling robo-dogs, stilt-bots and humanoid [illegible] Godzilla-sized, drone-dispensing boss with some of the shiniest, brightest in-game effects of E3. Because it's all virtual, computer-style effects make a nice change from usual blood 'n' mud FPSs, with bullets leaving hexagon trails and enemies disappearing in a puff of vectors. Despite all the on-screen chaos, the frame-rate stayed rock-steady at an impressive 60fps. And things wound up with a glimpse of the game's vast scale. One to watch.

PSM2 RECKONS

We're so used to games being slightly downgraded for a PSP cash-in that to see the process reversed is like a surprise party in our brains. Clean, frantic and rapid-fire, *Coded Arms* is already on the 'Possibly Excellent PS3 FPSs' list we keep in our pockets.

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Format: PS2 Developer: Climax Publisher: 2K Games ETA: Early 2007

GHOST RIDER

Who gave a motorbike license to a flaming-headed skeleton, anyway?

Apparently, this game is based on the original comic book series of the motorbike-riding flaming-skulled skeleton, rather than the forthcoming (and apparently pump) movie starring Nicolas Cage. Good.

We had a go and can confirm that, well, it's all right. There are linear driving sections where you get to steer Rider's flame bike through the city and the combat is like *Devil May Cry*. Only not as good obviously. It's all juggle combos and acrobatics, but isn't that exciting. Not yet, anyway, but there's plenty of time for it to get better.

PSM RECKONS *We never really got into Ghost Rider, but this looks interesting and the very idea of having a flaming skull for a head fascinates us. How does he shower?*

Format: PS3 Developer: Incognito Publisher: Sony ETA: Noivember 2006

WARHAWK

Take PS3's tilt-sensitive controller for a test drive.

With PS3's tilt-sensing pad seeming to take developers by surprise more than the general public – Koj himself claims he only found out about it a two days before the show – it's no big surprise that hardly anyone's taken advantage of it so far. Step up Incognito, with a remake of *WarHawk*.

If you tutted at the arm-waving demo during Sony's conference, don't despair – once you've actually got to grips with the controller, steering's precise and refined, only requiring tiny adjustments to glide down a canyone or skid across a lake. Could it replace the analogue sticks? Too early to say...

PSM RECKONS *As a tech demo it's excellent, but sadly, the textures and ships themselves look a bit last-gen. But we're loving that controller. We're so glad you ditched the boomerang thing, Sony. A wise decision.*

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

Format: PS2 Developer: 7 Studios Publisher: THQ ETA: Christmas 2006

THE SOPRANOS

Bada-bing! TV's swearest series hits PS2.

Too young to have cared about *The Godfather*? Then try this – THQ are adapting HBO's hit Mafioso-drama for PS2 – but you don't get to be Tony. Though the game will feature the voice and likeness of James Gandolfini, you'll be playing as the illegitimate son of Sal 'Big Pussy' Bonpesiero, played by Vincent Pesore.

You'll be trying to earn Tony's respect by earning money on collections, intimidating people and extorting others. Apart from that, THQ won't give us any more any details – the game will feature the voices of other key actors, but they're not saying who.

PSM RECKONS *We'll reserve judgement, but considering that 7 Studios' last game was the sub-par* Fantastic Four, *we aren't keeping our hopes too high.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Digi-Guys Publisher: Sony ETA: 2007

WAR DEVIL: ENIGMA

Someone suggested 'Peace Devil', but they got fired.

Notable things about *War Devil*: 1: Alongside *Gran Turismo*, it was one of the only PS3 games to be running at the near-impossible uber-resolution of 1920x1080p, and 2: It looked miles better than *Gran Turismo*.

Though details are scarce, the early trailer showed a pleasing blend of gothic architecture and futuristic cyber-kit, with the eponymous hero – Mr Devil – coming equipped with a hand pistol and wrist knife. The enemies are your typical skull-faced cyberdogs, and the whole thing was definitely running in real time – we actually noticed a tell-tale flicker of slowdown. No gameplay details yet, but if it isn't at least vaguely similar to *Devil May Cry*, we'll eat our own arms.

PSM RECKONS *Could be exciting and different – could be* God Of War *with more hair. With no gameplay on offer, there's no way to tell, but it certainly looks tremendous.*

JEEP THRILLS: The zombies in *Dead Rising* can *drive*. That's not playing fair, surely?

Format: PS3 Developer: Capcom Publisher: Capcom ETA: Late 2006

DEAD RISING

Clean-up in aisle three!

Dead Rising proves what we've always said – as long as the undead can't *sprint*, zombie apocalypse would be fun.

You can smash their kneecaps with bowling balls, crush their skulls with skateboards, smack them with golf clubs or lumps of frozen tuna, and even simply dress up like a toddler and murder them all with a machine gun. With hundreds of groaners on screen at once and a mall full of kit to massacre them with, this might not be the most emotionally complex game on PS3, but – once Capcom confirm it's coming – it's likely to be one of the most fun.

PSM RECKONS *Rumours that it'll only take three hours to finish suggest this'll be a short, sharp blast – but we're upset about the lack of* Resi 5 *news from Capcom. What's going on there?*

Format: PS3 Developer: Sega Publisher: Sega ETA: Early 2007

SONIC PS3

Sonic's back... but why does he always have to bring his friends?

How fast is new Sonic? *Really* fast. Cheek-flappingly, sound-barrier-burstingly fast. So fast, in fact, that in the demo we played there's a lot of dangerous scenery around and Sonic's often running at such speed that we ended up slamming into it without really knowing what's going on. Still, that's a difficulty-optimisation 'issue', and should be sorted by release time. So what else is there?

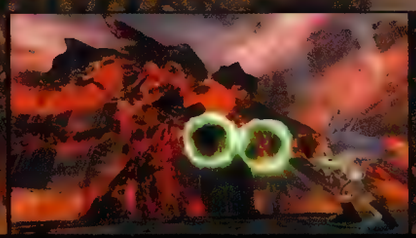
Good things: Sonic looks beautiful. A bit taller and longer-limbed – this game's set in the 'real' world, which means he'll have to chat to actual humans – he's shinier and sleeker than ever before, with enemies to match. The next-gen environment means the levels are more expansive, with branching pathways and sweeping vistas to enjoy as you richochet off launch pads én route to a chasm-related death. The fur textures are quite nice. Bad things: Shadow's back, although hopefully there isn't going to be any gunplay. Things we're not sure about: there's a new silver hedgehog called – yes! – Silver. Instead of running really fast, he uses his telekinetic powers to pick up objects and throw them around, and instead of dashing around the lush green fields we love, he hangs out in – wait for it – a *post-apocalyptic wasteland.* Oh... arse.

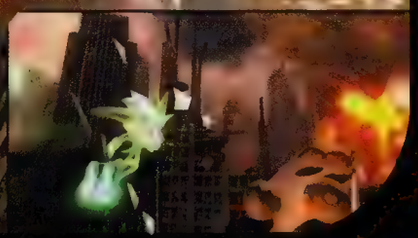
"GOOD THINGS: SONIC LOOKS BEAUTIFUL. BAD THINGS: SHADOW'S BACK"

PSM2 RECKONS

We don't want this to suffer the same fate as the *Sonic Adventure* series, so Sega really need to sort out the camera system before this hits the shelves. Other than that, it could be great. Despite Silver. And Shadow. And the post-apocalyptic wasteland.

PSM PRESENTS STARS OF E3
THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!





GROAN UP: This looks suspiciously 'adult' to us. Where are all the green fields and blue skies?

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

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MEANER ARENA

The demo's action all took place in a 'small' gladiatorial arena. This is at odds with the vast, open warfield of the previous video, but it was an ideal place to show off the combat and crowds of enemies lining up to take a battering. Who'd have thought that this would be one of the PS3 highlights? Eh?

Format: PS3 Developer: Ninja Theory Publisher: Sony ETA: TBA

HEAVENLY SWORD

After *Metal Gear*, this could be the most exciting PS3 title around...

Borrowing ideas from *Onimusha* and *God Of War*, this slash-'em-up from Sony was one of the best-received playable PS3 demos on the show floor. Thanks to the slick animation of the main character, fighting feels smooth and responsive and there are even button-tapping sections similar to those seenin *Resident Evil 4*. By squeezing the face buttons and nudging the analogue stick, the red-haired lead character spiralled into the air and fought a group of enemies Matrix-style.

The demo was confined to one small arena, but it was packed with destructible objects that enemies could be thrown into to cause extra damage. The game also features a meter that, when you perform combos and cool moves, fills up and lets you unleash a gorgeously cinematic special attack. You can also switch weapons at will, choosing between a pair of deadly hooks and a gargantuan sword. Exciting stuff, definitely.

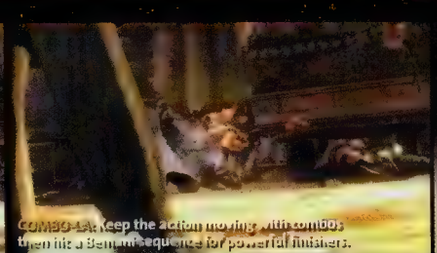
If the context-sensitive moves are varied and interesting enough to keep us entertained from start to finish, and if the locations get a little more expansive than the tiny colosseum on show in the demo, this'll be an absolutely essential PS3 title. Girls with swords are *always* entertaining.

"IF THE LOCATIONS GET MORE EXPANSIVE, THIS'LL BE AN ESSENTIAL PS3 GAME"

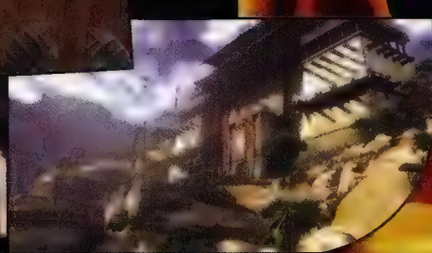
PSM2 RECKONS

***Heavenly Sword* is one of the few games that looked almost identical to the early preview screenshots released at last year's E3. It was one of the most impressive titles on show, making the likes of *Genji 2* look decidedly half-hearted.**

PSM2 PRESENTS STARS OF E3 THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!



COMBO-LA: Keep the action moving with combos then hit a Beat to sequence for powerful finishers.



Format: PS3 Developer: Ubi Soft Publisher: Ubi Soft ETA: TBA

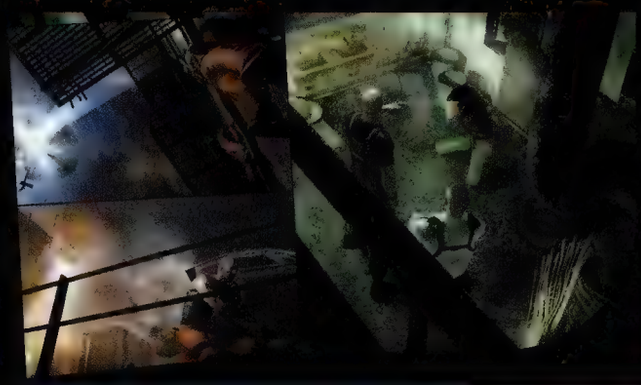
SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

Whose side are you *really* on?

Quick, decide: you've got to shoot a friend in the face or lose the trust of a bunch of terrorists – with potential fatal consequences for you and the rest of the world. What are you going to do, smartarse? Eh?

This is the sort of decision-making you'll be faced with in new *Splinter Cell*. Ubi Soft call them 'directed moments', but they're far from the only times you'll get a bit heart-in-mouth. Try an in-game set-piece where an exploding bus careers down the street inches from your face. Or a bit where you hang on the underside of a truck. Or a freefall minigame where you're given seconds to open your backup 'chute or become spy-paté. Who's got time to worry about friends?

PSM RECKONS *We haven't felt guilty about in-game murder since* Shadow Of The Colossus *– and we still stabbed those monsters up through the tears. If* Splinter Cell *really thinks we're not going to shoot everyone it tells us to, it's going to have to be something pretty special...*



Format: PS3 Developer: Sony Publisher: Sony ETA: November 2006

THE EYE OF JUDGMENT

Card games and cameras? Sounds sinister, but it's not.

How can you possibly make a turn-based card-battle game interesting? Easy – make the monsters *come to life*.

Shown as a demonstration of PS3, EyeToy's capabilities, EOJ couldn't be simpler – simply put a real, physical card in front of the camera and it'll recognise the pattern on it and generate an appropriate beast. Combine cards or flick them in certain directions, and you'll create new creatures or pull off special moves. It's like *Yu-Gi-Oh*, only about a million times more interesting.

PSM RECKONS *As a tech demo it's spectacular, but as a game it's hard to get excited about. And we really weren't impressed by Phil Harrison's special 'duck' card. We can't imagine being too excited about this. And what an overblown name...*

Format: PS3 Developer: Evolution Studios Publisher: Sony ETA: Winter 2006

MOTOR STORM

The dirtiest game we've played since Andy brought in his 'special' snap...

If street racing's the *cool* older brother of the driving genre, mud-churners tend to be the idiot second cousin – sort of fun for a while, but you wouldn't want to take them home.

Motor Storm could be about to change all that. Rather than messing about with 'preloading' jumps, the emphasis is on speed and aggression – other cars can be rammed off the road and even at this early stage we spotted riders flipping each other the bird and doing pelvic thrusts towards strikeen foes. The game boasts more than 15 vehicles, any of which can be used in a race – a motorbike might be able to take a high, technically tricky shortcut, but a big rig'll prove almost impossible to run off the road. And most interestingly, the whole game's set during a massive rock concert, with Evolution promising that if you put your own CDs in the PS3 it'll make them sound live. Nath can't wait to burn rubber to the sounds of his Phil Collins collection.

PSM RECKONS *We were wowed by the mud physics, but the vicious AI needs a bit of toning down. We shall see.*

PSM PRESENTS

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Format: PS3 Developer: Quantic Dream Publisher: Sony ETA: TBA

HEAVY RAIN

Best 'sob physics' on PS3. Fact.

With all the explosions and bullet deformation at E3, this was a surprise: some of the best graphics on offer were of a lady having a cry in her kitchen.

The 'Heavy Rain Audition' showed an actress waving a gun about, pointing it at herself and then the viewer. Every facial crinkle, every twitch, every tear looked real – like an actual person crying actual tears. To summarise, then: if you like tearful femmes, this should top your shopping list.

PSM RECKONS *It's nice that the Cell processor doesn't have to render bullets and chunks of brain. This technical demo from the makers of Fahrenheit was so real it was spooky.*

Format: PS3 Developer: Bizarre Creations Publisher: Sega ETA: 2007

THE CLUB

If your name's not down... you're getting shot in the face.

What do you do when betting on the horses gets a bit stale? Well, if you can join *The Club*, you could always throw your wad down on the chances of a bunch of heavily-armed men who've unleashed in a camera-stuffed warehouse and instructed to kill each other with rocket launchers.

Like Bizarre's earlier *Metropolis Street Racer*, spectating and betting's almost as important as the actual competing, although it isn't as fatal. Well, not at the start – but if *Manhunt*'s anything to go by, it's only a matter of time.

PSM RECKONS *Interestingly, Bizarre's website promises that you'll be 'wielding high-powered weaponry in places you never imagined' – which is a surprise to us, because from what we've seen it looks like you hang out in a murky warehouse. Still, if Bizarre can do third-person shooting as well as they do driving, this should be a cracker.*

Forget the Rock Bottom, the Stone Cold Stunner and the Pedigree – what's the one move that's always been missing from wrestling games? That's right – this *Smackdown*, thanks to the magic of what THQ are calling 'environmental hotspots', you'll finally be able to drop wrestlers onto the ropes *groin-first*. But if you think that's exciting, check this out – instead of simply walking away while they crumple to the floor, you can can actually grab the ropes and *jiggle them up and down*. Hear that noise? That's the sound of Yuke's saying "Checkmate, *Tekken*. Check. Mate."

Other reasons why *Smackdown's* going to be the premier source of man-on-man violence this winter? Sure. Environmental hotspots also mean you'll be able to ram an opponent's head into the ringpost, cage or steel steps, as well as climbing scenery for huge airtime. Crowd interactivity means you can swipe bottles and chairs from the locals – *Def Jam*-style – toss your opponent into their midst, or simply grab a rival wrestler's sign and rip it to tatters. Yuke's have been playing *Fight Night*, too – as well as a revamped sweat system, certain moves correspond to flicks of the analogue stick – doing an airplane spin, for instance, might involve a 360 twirl, while a vertical suplex just involves holding it up in the air. But we've saved the best until last – you'll be able to prop a ladder up against the ropes, then sprint up it and out of the ring. Your move, *Tekken*.

Format: PS3 Developer: Yuke's Publisher: THQ ETA: November 2007

WWE SMACK

'He's folded him up like a three-

IN THE RING

As ever, THQ are keeping the roster of grapplers under wraps, but we'd hazard a guess that new guys to the series will include: Umaga, The Spirit Squad, Mark Henry, Finlay, Lashley and – if there's any justice – Ken Kennedy. And if the Legends stable doesn't include Bret Hart, we'll eat our wrestling tights.

PSM2 RECKONS

THQ are definitely listening to fans, and what they're doing with the control scheme seems positive. Our only doubt it, with a simultaneous release for PS2, PSP and PS3 planned, let's hope the older formats don't get neglected.

PSM PRESENTS STARS OF E3 THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH

DOWN VS RAW

dollar card table!' Ah, Jim Ross, how we've missed you...

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

20GB OR 60GB? MEET THE FINISHED PLAYSTATION 3!

This is it. This is the final, no going back PS3 hardware. What's different? What's new? And what's with the two versions...?

First of all, get used to the colour. PS3, for the launch period at least, will be "clear black" as Ken Kutaragi described it. The silver and white versions touted at last year's show will doubtless be available at some stage, but in order to meet those ambitious worldwide launch plans they simply couldn't be fiddling with different colours. Fortunately, black was our favourite colour anyway.

And note the sleek silver trim on the 60Gb version. While the 20Gb is solid black (black logo, trim and drive slot on a black background), the 60Gb machine has silver bits to show off what a better class of PS3 gamer you are. And the differences between the two machines go even deeper. While some previously announced features have bitten the dust entirely (check later in this feature for a full moaning breakdown of the new changes) Sony have trimmed away more than the size of the hard drive for the 'bargain priced' PS3.

Check our table for the full list of differences – suffice to say that if you save your cash and go for the 20Gb version, you're losing the HDMI port, card slots and wireless capabilities of PS3. That's quite a reduction, meaning that you're compromising PS3's output with your new high-def TV, forgetting about firing content to your PSP while on the bog and waving sweet sayonara to plugging your camera and MP3 player's memory stick in. That, plus the fact the hard drive is one third the size of course.

So meet PS3. In whichever flavour you buy it, come November you're going to be the proud owner of the world's greatest games machine.

PLAYSTATION 3
IT'S THE ALL-NEW PS3!
At first glance it's the same as the silver unit we revealed a year ago. In truth it's rather different. Flip the page to find out how your PS3 has changed and what going for the cheaper 20Gb model will really mean.
PSM
STARS OF E3
THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!
RESET
SONY

"THAT'S QUITE A REDUCTION. WAVE SWEET SAYONARA TO PLUGGING IN YOUR CAMERA AND MP3 PLAYER'S MEMORY STICK"

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

THE BEST OF THE E3 SHOW! ALL THE BIGGEST GAMES PLAYED TO DEATH!

2005 PS3 VERSUS 2006 PS3

How has PS3 changed? Let's compare the silver machine from last year with the 2006 black model shown at E3.

NEW!
Just look at those specs. The number of supported formats goes through the roof for the final unit, with every one of PS3's features subtly embossed on its top-most edge.

NEW!
PS3 is clearly a power-hungry beast and Sony are taking no risks with the final machine's ventilation. There's been a marked increase in slots and holes to keep your PS3 cool. The result is rather less sleek than they originally planned.

GONE!
Not only were there four USB 2.0 ports on the front of the machine, there used to be another two on the back. What smacked of USB overkill is indeed an unnecessary folly that Sony have seen the better of. New PS3 loses the two extra ports on the back, but retains the four on the front.

NEW!
Those of you looking forward to getting to grips on Sony's space banana will be disapointed. The finished and final PlayStation 3 pad is (at first glance) surprsingly similar to the existing Dual Shock 2 pad. Doesn't exactly match the new machine does it? Hmm.

GONE!
Three Ethernet ports – one as an input and two as echo outputs, allowing you to use your PS3 as a central hub, able to connect to the net and across to two further network devices. Forget that. New PS3 has one plain old-fashioned input. And that's your lot.

GONE!
Two HDMI ports, running two simultaneous high-def TVs for an incredible 32 by nine double widescreen experience? Forget it. PS3 now only features one HDMI port. And the 20Gb version doesn't even have that (flip the page).

NEW!
There are two new little lights on the front. One that flash when it accesses the hard drive and one that shows wireless activity. See? it's not all bad is it?

HDMI PORT EXPLAINED

Quamet et iure consequat. Ut

This is the key to running your PS3 in 'proper' high def. We make the distinction of 'proper' high def because, while you WILL be able to use a component lead with your PS3 for high definition TV connection, it's worth noting that the current HD-spec demands a digital connection between console and TV before you can properly call your TV 'HD Ready'. That hasn't stopped Xbox 360 banging on about being 'high def' despite only having a component output, so you'll always be able to get 360-quality results with a component lead plugged between the AV Multi Out of PS3 and the component ports of your TV. Saying that the 20Gb version of PS3 "doesn't do HD" is a mistake – it'll do it just as well as a 360 currently does. But if you want 'proper' 'real' 'future-proof' and – above all – *digital* high def, just as Lord Kutaragi and the Blu-ray specs committee intended, then you must go for a 60Gb PlayStation 3 from the start as that's the only model with the HDMI port. You'll thank yourself for it in the end, trust us.

THE FINAL PS3 JOYPAD

But that's just a DualShock2! Nope, look a bit more closely. Closer than that...

At the May 2005 E3, Sony whipped out their infamous 'space banana'. While we didn't bat much of an eyelid at the time, it soon transpired that the world hated the new design – so much so that within hours of Ken whipping his hanky off the thing they were already stressing the 'concept prototype' nature of the curly-controller to anyone who would listen.

We've long been predicting that E3 2006 would be the place to see the new controller, but what we didn't bank on was the total scaredy-cat lack of imagination Sony would exhibit with their new pad: It looks exactly the same as the DualShock 3. So much so, that despite it being used throughout the conference's on-stage demos we didn't realise we were looking at the new pad until Phil Harrison rubbed it in our faces with a demo set aside to show off the new pads skills.

Yes, the PS3 pad may look the same (and let's not forget that this is the second time they've refused to change the appearance of the PlayStation pad – the DualShock 2 was, after all, merely a black, internally tweaked version of the PSone DualShock) but it's a rather different beast. Inside are sensors that can sense motion in 'six axis'. It can not only detect the familiar acts of tilting and twisting (pitch, yaw and roll) but also movement in 3D space (up and down, left and right and forwards and backwards). At its simplest level, this means that if you hold the pad in your hands and tilt it left and right you can steer a car or plane left and right or up and down. Far more amazing, though, is this ability to sense where the pad is being moved (see our Hands-On Verdict for more thoughts).

Button wise, it's a familiar story, the only differences being a great analogue 'throw' on the L2 and R2 buttons, mimicking the kind of control offered by the Xbox 360 controller and the GameCube and Dreamcast pads before it. Long-throw shoulder buttons are ideal for driving games, allowing you to express different levels of acceleration and brake and are long overdue on a PS controller we reckon. Also, the pad's sticks now have a greater range of movement to them, though we only noticed that they 'went that little bit further' when this was pointed out to us. Similarly the resolution of the sensors that read how far the stick is being moved has been increased. And, similarly, we couldn't notice any difference.

The only truly 'new button' is the central PS button which – we're proud to reveal – currently does nothing. And we've prodded it loads. However, we'll stake our spuds on it being allied to the four new LED lights on the top edge of the controller. The lights show which virtual port you've got the pad plugged into, with the PS button most likely allowing you to select which player you're 'being', as well as turn on and off the battery powered, wireless pad.

Bad news? There's no vibration feature (meaning they couldn't call it the DualShock 3). Sony reckon that this would interfere with the motion sensing, although a more likely explanation is that the lawsuit won recently by Immersion would have meant Sony paying a fortune to include it. Similarly biting the dust are the DualShock 2's pressure-sensitive buttons – a feature that was little used... and loathed when it was. Kiss it goodbye.

"INSIDE ARE SENSORS THAT CAN DETECT MOTION IN 'SIX AXIS', BE IT TILTING OR TWISTING TO MOVEMENTS IN 3D SPACE"

NEW!
The new pad is totally wireless. And yet despite the inclusion of a battery (charged via USB connection to your PS3) and the tilting system it's still lighter than the current DualShock 2 PS2 pad.

NEW!
The sticks move further and are more sensitive. The L2 and R2 buttons have a longer throw on them (but still about half of what 360's pad can do) and a new PS button takes games back to the PS3 menu. Just like a 360 then.

HANDS-ON VERDICT

We got to know the new pad real well during the E3 show

The only tilt-sensing game at the entire show was Sony's *Warhawk*. That said we're pleased to report that it worked surprisingly well. The buttons feel exactly the same as on a DualShock 2 (same size, positioning, pressure resistance) and the pad sits in the hands in the same way (it appears to be exactly the same size). If we concentrated really hard we could just about believe Phil Harrison's claim that it was lighter than a DualShock 2.

***Warhawk* was an excellent demo. The third-person external view of your craft was a great way to show off the connection between pad and plane. Tilting the pad caused the craft to bank at the exact same angle. Tilt forward to dive down, pull back and hold vertically to swoop upwards. While the results ever so slightly lagged behind the movements of the pad, it felt perfectly responsive – much the same as when you twang a stick in a driving game, you don't get an instant 90 degree bend but a softened interpretation of what you really wanted.**

So far, so predictable – the pad has a tilt sensor in it. What was surprising, however, was the ability to raise and drop the joypad and see your plane increase and decrease in height from the ground. This requires a different, altogether cleverer type of sensor. Despite the angle of the pad not changing, it knew that it was being raised or lowered, as if able to measure the distance from the ground and somehow translate it to on screen results. Jerking the pad upwards made our craft do the same, similarly dropping the pad sent us plunging into the ground. Clearly an 'acceleration detector' was in there too, with the pad able to tell if it was being moved quickly or jerked to a stop.

It's clearly a very clever thing, but it remains to be seen how many of the new games will use this feature which, if we're honest, is clearly there to rip-off the control features of Nintendo's upcoming Wii console. *Warhawk* works great but we're not sure if you could face lap after lap of wrist-twisting, sofa-leaning *Gran Turismo*. Despite this originality of giving our thumbs the day off we can see the 'gimme the sticks' option being the preferred control mode for many.

SIX SENSE

The new pad can detect six types of motion.

PSM2 PRESENTS

STARS OF E3

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20GB PS3 VERSUS 60GB PS3

Want a cheap PS3? You might like the soundn of the £350 price but can you live without these features?

HARD DRIVE SPACE

20Gb sounds huge, but 60Gb is huger. If you're going to use PS3 for more than saving your games then 20Gb can get full pretty quickly. If Sony deliver on the online marketplace idea, then you can expect to be stuffing your PS3 full of demos, videos and add-ons. We know folk who've already used up every ounce of the Xbox 360's 20Gb drive – and expect PS3 content to not only be more worth downloading but bigger too.

MEMORY CARD SLOTS

The 20Gb PS3 lacks any card ports. Not a huge hardship, this one. Given that even the full-fat 60Gb PS3 doesn't have a PS2 Memory Card slot (why?) then not being able to plug in your PSP stick or media from your camera or MP3 etc isn't much of a loss. Besides, you can always get stuff into your PS3 via the USB ports. (The card ports are below a flap on the top/front of the 60Gb unit, incidentally).

SHINY BITS

The biggest nail in the 20Gb PS3's techno-coffin? It doesn't have the shiny logo, shiny front strip and shiny disc drive slot that the 60Gb has. It's all about the bling, baby.

HDMI PORT

Compare the back panel of the 20Gb PS3 above and the 60Gb model to the right. The 20Gb PS3 lacks the HDMI port. This is big news, making the PS2 ideal for players who don't plan to go high-def any time soon. You might think that that's you, but c'mon, do you really plan to never buy an HD-TV? You might not need this port right now, but you will in the future.

802.11 WIRELESS

Now this is a let down – no wireless on the 20Gb version. Like the loss of the HDMI port, this may sound like no hardship right now but we'll bet you that some time in the next couple of years you're going to wish you could connect to your PS3 from your garden/bedroom/bathroom via your laptop/PSP/next-gen iPod. Being able to stream movies and music on the hard drive to your PSP or just give your home a wireless router with which to access the net is a big deal. We'll take the 60Gb version, please.

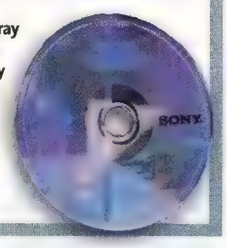
BLU-RAY EXPLAINED

It's worth taking time out to examine Blu-ray once more and *again* stress how *important* this bit is for PlayStation 3. Without it, it's in Xbox 360 territory – able to play games and DVDs. With it, it can play the next generation of movies and becomes the ideal partner to your brand new high-def TV.

Blu-ray movies, when they launch this winter, will be encoded at 1920x1080p resolution. We've talked about 1080p plenty of times in the past – suffice to say that 'p' (meaning 'progressive') has twice as many lines as 1080i ('i' being 'interlaced' – the process of making an image by doing alternate lines at a time then quickly swapping between them to make a full picture). 1080p is therefore twice as hard to do than 1080i, making it beyond the stretch of even today's on-the-highstreet high-def TVs and Xbox 360. PS3, on the other hand, has the power.

The fact is that your brand new high-def TV may not be as future proof as you thought. 1080p is already being spoken about as 'True HD', meaning that anything less won't cut it long term. As we've said in the past if you've got a 720p or 1080i set then you won't see PlayStation 3 and Blu-ray at their absolute ultimate power. Sure, they'll look the absolute bomb, but side by side with a 1080p set you will see the difference.

So, if you're buying a set ready for Blu-ray and PS3 make sure you get one that runs at 1080p and has a screen resolution of 1920 by 1080. The bad news? There isn't a single set available in the UK that runs to these specs just yet, but every manufacturer has them in the pipeline for late 2006 – they just want to shift all their 720p, lower res 'high def' sets to less clued up punters first.



SPECS FEST #1

All you could possibly want to know. Specs on...

CPU		Cell Processor PowerPC-base Core @ 3.2 GHz 1 VMX vector unit per core 512KB L2 cache 7 x SPE @ 3.2 Ghz 7 x 128b 128 SIMD GPRs 7 x @%^KB SRAM for SPE *1 of 8 SPEs reserved for redundancy total floating point performance: 218 GFLOPS	
GPU		RSX @550MHz 1.8 TFLOPS floating point performance Full HD (up to 1080p) x 2 channels Multi-way programmable parallel floating point shader pipelines	
Sound		Dolby 5.1ch, DTS, LPCM, etc. (Cell-base processing)	
Memory		256MB XDR MAin RAM @3.2GHz 256MB GDDR3 VRAM @700MHz	
System Bandwith		Main RAM 25.6GB/s VRAM 22.4GB/s RSX 20GB/s (write) + 15GB/s (read) SB 2.5GB/s (write) + 2.5 GB/s (read)	
System Floating Point Performance		2 TFLOPS	
Storage	**HDD**	Detachable 2.5" HDD slot x 1	
I/O	**USB**	Front x 4, Rear x 2 (USB2.0)	
	Memory Stick **SD** **Compact Flash**	standard/Duo, Pro x 1 standard/mini x 1 (Type I, II) x 1	
Communication **Ethernet** **Wi-FI** **Bluetooth**		 (10BASE-T, 100BASE-TX, 1000BASE-T) x 3 (input x 1 + output x 2) IEEE 802.11 b/g Bluetooth 2.0 (EDR)	
Controller		Bluetooth (up to 7) USB2.0 (wired) WI-FI (PSP®) Network (over IP)	
AV Output		Screen Size 480i, 480p, 720p, 1080i, 1080p HDMI HDMI out x 2 Analog AV MULTI OUT x 1	
Disc Media *read only	**CD**	Playstation®	CD-ROM
		Playstation®2	CD-ROM
		CD-DA	CD-DA (ROM), CD-R, CD-RW
		SACD	SACD Hybrid (CD layer), SACD HD
		Dual Disc	DualDisc (audio side), DualDisc (DVD side)
	DVD	Playstation®2	DVD-ROM
		Playstation®3	DVD-ROM
		DVD-Video	DVD-ROM, DVD-r, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+RW
	Blu-ray Disc	Playstation®3	BD-ROM
		BD-Video	BD-ROM, BD-R, BD-RE

20GB PS3 VERSUS 60GB PS3

If you're trying to decide between a 20Gb and a 60Gb PS3, you're going to need to know exactly what that size difference means. We've raided our computers and iPods to produce the following approximate list of how much space digital 'stuff' takes up:

4,000 SONGS IN MP3 FORMAT = 20GB

50 PSP QUALITY FILMS = 25GB

1 HIGH-DEFINITION DEMO MOVIE (5 MINS LONG) = 2GB

10,000 DIGITAL PHOTOS = 10GB

1 AVERAGE SIZED XBOX 360 GAME DEMO = 3GB

1 BLU-RAY QUALITY FILM (120 MINUTES) = 25GB

1 DVD SPEC FILM (120 MINUTES) = 9GB

SPECS FEST #2

How do the 20Gb and 60Gb machines compare?

HDD	2.5" Serial ATA	_(20GB)	_(60GB)
I/O	USB 2.0	_(x4)	
	MemoryStick /SD/Compact Flash		
Communication	Ethernet	_(x1 / 10BASE-T, 100BASE-TX, 1000BASE-T)	
	IEEE802.11 b/g		
	Bluetooth 2.0 (EDR)		
Wireless controller (Bluetooth)			
AV Output	Screen size	480i, 480p, 720p, 1080i, 1080p	
	HDMI OUT		_(x1 / HDMI NextGen
	AV MULTI OUT	_(x1)	
	DIGITAL OUT (OPTICAL)	_(x1)	
BD/DVD/CD Drive (Read Only)	Maximum Read Speed	BD 2x (BD-ROM) DVD 8x (DVD-ROM) CD 24x (CD_ROM) SACD 2x	
Dimensions		Approximately 325 mm (W) x 98mm (H) x 274mm (D)	
Weight		Approximately 5 kg	

E3: UNCUT

You've seen the game and the final PS3 hardware now let PSM2 guide your through the *real* E3 – from winners and losers, to backstage gossip and the fallout from *that* Sony press conference...

E3 TRENDS

You weren't even allowed into E3 if your game didn't involve at least one of the following things:

1) FIRST PERSON SHOOTERS

Haze, The Darkness, Crysis, Unreal Tournament, Resistance: Fall of Man, Call Of Duty 3, Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway... where did all the driving games go? And somebody had to point out to us that there were no platformers, because we'd gone so war-blind as to forget it existed as a *genre*.

2) THE JUNGLE

Haze, Crysis, Just Cause, Mercenaries 2... the rush to the next-gen certainly means one thing: realistic looking leaves.

3) PRIVATE MILITARY ARMIES

MGS4, Haze, Army of Two, Mercenaries 2. What happened to the good old days when soldiers used to fight for *countries?* Or crazed military dictators? It's all about the corporations now.

4) BLOOM LIGHTING

Every next-gen game has a bit where you look into the distance and get blinded. It's the law.

5) SUPERFLUOUS PHYSICS

Sure, I can rip apart the ground and permanently deform the polygon mesh, but does it actually affect the *game*? Be honest now, next-gen driving developers. And anyone who might, say, be working on an Indiana Jones game.

6) BOMBED OUT CITIES

Just because PS3 can do destructible environments, it doesn't mean we want to spend the rest of our virtual lives trudging through rubble-dashed council estates. Dammit, we'll skip through the streets of Super Happy Rainbow Village even if you can't damage the *flowers*.

DAY ONE

Flight is delayed, so we sit in the bar with *Broken Sword* creator Charles Cecil, sharing his experiences of working on the *Da Vinci Code* (see page 74) – did you *really* give Ron Howard tips on how to direct the film, Charles? Well, he does know his Knights Templar...

DAY TWO

Almost do a sick in a cab, after a combination of jet lag, baby lager and richer than kings Eggs Benedict takes its toll. Bumble around shops nodding at passing members of the UK games industry trying to avoid buying the same ironic T-shirts. Buy bright blue Miami Vice slacks and Gordon Freeman nerd shades in self-defeating contrary gesture.

DAY THREE

10am: Activision's pre-E3 event. We get our first glimpse of a proper PS3 game... *Marvel Ultimate Alliance*. Anti-climax is crippling. It looks like *X-Men Legends* running on a PC. In the schoolroom-like silence Colleague passes us a notepad with **PS3 :(** written on it. Superb – if potentially misleading – *Tony Hawk Project 8* trailer saves day. *Tony Hawk* on Wii is interesting, but visually nob. Colleague scrawls **Wii :o**, like an emoticon that just been punched in the plums.

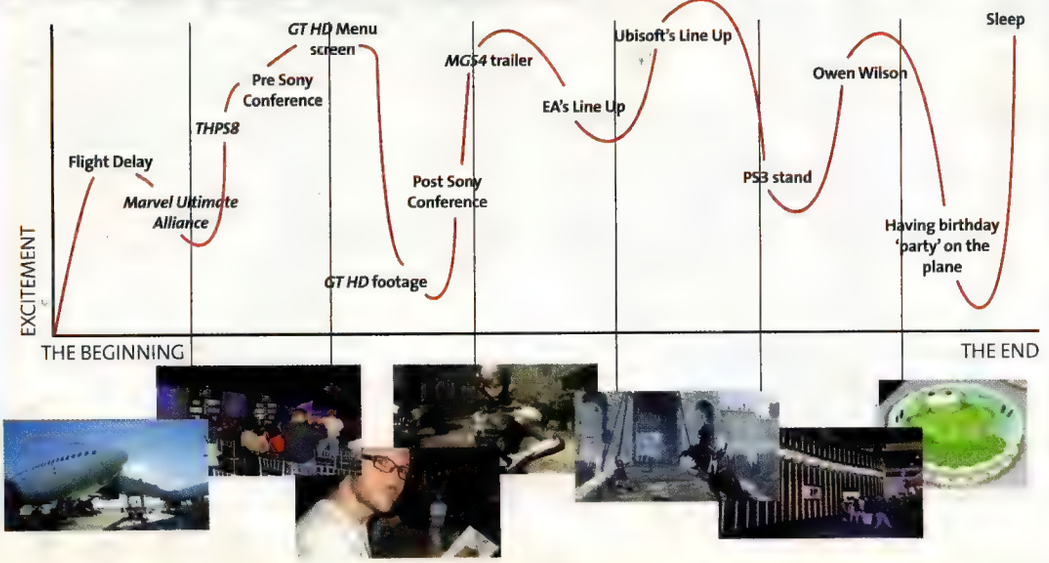
2pm. Arrive at pre-E3 Sony Conference. Bump into ex-PSM2 man Duncan Baizley, who clocks seven plastic beakers of red wine before the show, later claiming he left midway through and hid behind a tractor to confuse security. Show delayed by half hour. Two hours later, as Ken unveils the new 6D pad, it still feels like it hasn't started. The only time we get *proper* excited is when *GT HD* flips onto the menu screen, which lasts the entire three, or four, seconds it takes the footage to start. Colleague can't find notepad, but makes the 'punched in plums' face. After saying "We've taken technology and made magic," Phil Harrison unveils an EyeToy card game with magical dragons and, even though our therapist says we should stop mentioning it, *Genji 2* – leaving 1000 of the world's leading technology and games journalist gasping as a grown man chases a boss crab for ten minutes to flip him over and poke a sword in his belly. Microsoft-style 'We are the world' PS3 'mood' trailer, with token pretty girl and a series of plebs pretending they actually make "Pap, pap, pap" shooting noises while they play, makes us want to duck out and see if there's space behind the tractor. After enduring the underwhelming first party showreel, featuring Naughty Dog's Abercrombie and Fitch Man's Saturday Matinee Jungle Adventure game and the frankly not-true *Eight Days* – perhaps we'd believe in the Easter Bunny if he painted himself with a crosshair and energy barcoin, eh, Sony? – we actually *cheered* when we saw *Tekken 6*. It was like being at a party where you don't know anyone, and genuinely feeling pleased to bump into the fat kid you spent years avoiding at school. *FFXIII, MGS4* and, er, something we can't remember rescues our sanity. Catch up with Baizley and have a great night right up until the moment he threatens us with a butter knife in his hotel suite and we rush home to think about more comforting things, like *Genji 2*. The show hasn't even started yet.

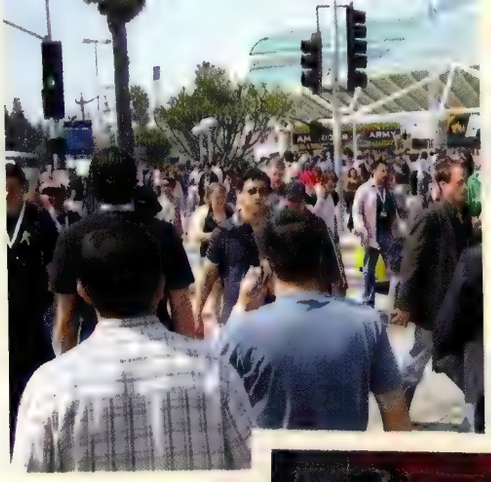
DAY FOUR

Konami's pre-E3 show. After the corporate, soulless magnitude of the Sony conference (which we spent squinting at a series of disappointments from 50 metres away, surrounded by lifestyle journalists and marketing people) being locked in a library with a hundred fat people who actually like games is quite heart warming. We even feel a soft spot for *Death Jr 2*. Koj takes the stage to a warm cheer, and the full 15-minute *MGS4* trailer makes us all believe, if only for the day, that everything is going to be alright. We even stand by a *PES6* banner for ten minutes, hoping to suck up restorative feel good vibes. In fact, the day is going brilliantly until we pick up our gift from the Nokia party: A roll of sellotape somewhat generously described as a 'Gamer's Protection Bandage'. At least it wasn't an N-Gage.

E3 EXCITEMENT TIMELINE

It's E3 2006 AT A GLANCE!





DAY FIVE

Ten minutes into the show, surrounded by 20,000 fat men, super nerds, contemptuous marketing bosses, and hired glamour girls; baking under hot lights and deafened by approximately 6578 individual sound sources, we text the following message to colleague: **"I know this is a quid lost, but I have to share my complete and utter sadness and fear upon entering the hall. I am finished before I start. Christ, *Splinter Cell* looks good on <rival console deleted> mind..."**

EA's stand. After wondering why *Madden* on PS3 looks so sketchy ("30% complete," says a big sticker), desperately looking for the promised avalanche of next-gen games and trying to kid ourselves that *Superman: Returns* is somehow different to old *Spiderman*, we're bundled into a room to watch *Command and Conquer 3: Tiberium*. On PC. Bum. Mercifully, we get behind closed doors with *Army of Two* – sharing the room with the talented chaps from Criterion, of Burnout fame. As the demo finishes, Creative Director Alex Ward claps – as do we, mentally, like giant English gentlemen babies – before telling us, and not for the first time, that our *Black* was review was "bullshit" because we weren't so keen on the story.

Rest of the day blurs past, with honourable mentions for *Stranglehold* (slicker to play than you'd think), Take Two's *The Darkness* (graphically lush, grizzly, innovative FPS from the fellers who did the superb *Chronicles of Riddick* on Xbox) and an interview with *PES* genius Seabass, who appears to have hired a stylist. And brought him into interviews. Not to be outdone, Kojima's suit is *impeccable*, with lovely red brogues, and he doesn't even laugh when we ask whether Snake will be able to shave in *MGS4*, (with the same gravitas as Jeremy Paxman grilling Tony Blair over the proposed ID Card system). For the record: no. Oh, bump into chubby faced Michael Madsen in the corridor. We tell him to lay off the burgers. In our head.

DAY SIX

See *Call of Duty 3* behind closed doors. We're not allowed to speak yet, but... wow. It's a massive leap over last year's Xbox 360 game. See Bizarre Creation's *The Club* (like *Resi 5*'s sprinting bits, with a combo system somewhere between *Total Overdose* and *SSX* – you can always improve your 'run'), and *Sega Rally Revo* (nice mud physics). Ubisoft line-up blows us away, from *Rainbow Six: Vegas* to *Rayman Raving Rabbids* – even the games we used to hate are looking good. *Assassins* is gorgeous (running on a *massive* PC-based dev kit), and Free Rad's *Haze* is everything we expected. Interview *Okami* creator Inaba at the end of the day, who informs us the show is 'boring', and – Ubisoft stand excepted – we're inclined to agree. Does every game have to be an FPS? Where have all the platformers gone? And why is everyone demoing PS3 games on PCs? See Sony boss Phil Harrison in bar later that night looking all sad. We're scared to ask...

DAY SEVEN

Breaking point – aka the final day of the show. Lucasarts' *Indiana Jones* demonstrates some neat physics and AI, but can't see how they'll improve the core gameplay, at least not yet. Finally, the PS3 stand. Thirteen playable games, and all unremarkable, boring and perfunctory save *Heavenly Sword* (actually good), *Resistance: Fall of Man* (at least it looks nice) and *Motorstorm* (Colleague told us it was "b*ll*cks" the day before, so the fact it was average, with nice spot effects, actually cheered us up). Best bits were *Heavy Rain* and *Warhawk* hidden on the elevated platform above the stand. Saw Blu-ray running on a 56" Sony Bravia and walked away impressed. But not blown away. Oddly, neither was Hollywood funny man Owen Wilson, who ran away seconds before we could wrestle him to the floor for a photo. Maybe next year.

"I SHARE MY COMPLETE AND UTTER SADNESS UPON ENTERING THE HALL"

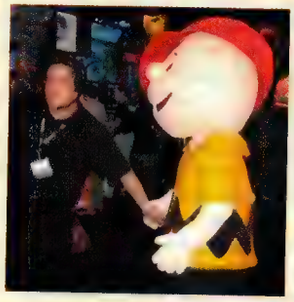
DISAPPOINTMENTS OF THE SHOW

1) The existence the 20Gb PS3.
2) *GT HD Super-Duper 10millionP.*
3) The price of a 60Gb PS3.
4) *Genji 2.*
5) PS3 games on massive PCs.

Bubbling *Waaay* Under: The lack of *GTA 4* announcement at Sony pre-E3 press conference, the majority of new PS2 games, Kaz Hirai being forced to whoop like a baby to build excitement while playing *Ridge Racer* on PSP, removal of rumble function from PS3 pad, *Ghost Rider, Marvel Ultimate Alliance*, Sony's touchy-feely worldwide PS3 cuddle video, Ken Kutaragi looking actually *sad* mid-conference.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SHOW

1) The [cough] rip off [cough] 6D PS3 fifty-floaty pad
2) Clocking Owen Wilson on the Sony stand
3) Everything Kojima. Or Seabass.
4) Seeing man in Charlie Brown suit being led by hand while repeatedly bashing into things



5) Using the word's "Target Footage" to describe anything on PS3 that looked as good as *Killzone* threatened to be last year. Example? *"Eight Days? Target footage, mate."*

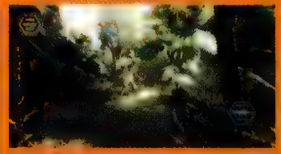
Bubbling Under: PSP RSS downloads, PS3's front end, Blu-Ray, Tiger Woods face demo, 007 logo on Activision stand *conveniently* pointed at EA's stand next door.

GAMES OF THE SHOW

1) ARMY OF TWO
Gorgeous water effects, innovative and truly co-op.

2) METAL GEAR 4
Mental, tragic, exciting genius.

3) ASSASSIN'S CREED
Knock-out visuals are only the start of what this offers.



4) HAZE
Only *excellent* but Free Radical promise loads to come.

5) STRANGLEHOLD
Looks like a *Max Payne* rip off, but is maximum joy to play.

BUBBLING UNDER: *Mercenaries: World in Flames, Tony Hawk's Project 8, Eight Days* (if it's *real*, and that's a massive if), *The Getaway* (ditto), *FFXIII, Valkyrie Profile 2, Heavy Rain* (who'd have thought next-gen tears would make us smile) and *The Darkness* (*All* games should have personal demon helpers with power drills).

"IT SEEMS DETERMINED NOT TO EXCITE IN ANY WAY"
EVOLUTION GT PAGE 63

Reviews

PLAYED TO DESTRUCTION BY PS2 EXPERTS

THE DA VINCI CODE
We've been playing this for ages and we *still* haven't met Jesus. Tsk. Oh well, welcome to the oddly violent world of *The Da Vinci Code*.

FORBIDDEN SIREN 2
This game features a woman whose torso is actually *a demon's face*. Do you need any further reason to investigate it?

OKAMI
It's the amazing and beautiful adventures of a friendly wolf with a paintbrush. This is how we imagine Rolf Harris would like to be reincarnated.

You want more?!
Of course you do. There's *WinBack 2* (98), *Dynasty Warriors 5: Empires* (98) and a stack of PSP goodness. So come and jump onto the reviews skateboard! Or summat.

WELCOME

So there we have it. PS3. November 17th. £410. (Or £350 if you want the smaller hard-drive, but really, why would you?) Quite a hefty chunk of cash, but worth it – and you've got less than six months to save up. Best cancel that summer holiday. And swap Sainsbury's for Aldi.

A bit unfortunate, then, that in a month when you should really start saving in earnest, PlayStation 2 suddenly coughs up a selection of games that you really should own. There's *Winning Eleven 10*, of course, which is everything you'd expect of a new Japanese *Pro Evo*. There's *Hitman: Blood Money*, which refines the *Hitman* Concept to its extreme and offers the most murderous – and most fun – game of the series. And, in some ways the most interesting of all, there's *Okami*. Let's point this out now – it may be a game about a big cuddly wolf painting pretty colours onto landscapes and helping out lovely villagers, but that doesn't make it a game for wusses. It's a wonderful experience and – shock – a wholly original idea. Brilliant.

So don't go abandoning your PS2 just yet. While there'll be an inevitable fall-off in numbers of games soon, PS2 can live on beyond the UK release of PS3. Well, until February, at least, when *God Of War 2* comes out. Will that be the last great PS2 game? Best stick around to find out.

AWARDS

If you see one of these fellas on a review, you know your luck is most definitely 'in'...

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 70. A thoroughly enjoyable, solid game and no mistake.

PSM2 SILVER AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 80. A top quality, cracking game is guaranteed.

PSM2 GOLD AWARD
Awarded to games that score over 90. Reserved for true classics – don't expect to see many of these.

PSM2 GAME OF THE MONTH
The best game in the issue. If you're getting only one game this month, get this!

PSM2'S SCORING SYSTEM

PSM2 is 100% editorially independent and we mark hard, but fair. We know you want buying advice you can trust and that's why when you see a game with a good score from PSM2 on the box, you can guarantee it's going to be worth the price. Marked precisely out of 100 rather than "three stars out of five", here's what those scores mean:

0-29	Shoddy nonsense. If you see a game with a score below 30, move away from the shelf.
30-49	Maybe some fun to be had but the gameplay and design are sure to be seriously flawed.
50-69	No major faults. This is fine for die-hard fans of the genre or if you spot it going cheap.
70-84	Now we're talking. An entertaining game that only just misses out on being special.
85-89	Get your wallet out! A game in this tight scoring band will be a near-classic.
90+	Unmissable. Essential. Superb. Classic. If you're a real gamer, you will need this game.

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

Bigger, more brutal and better than ever before...

VS

PES5? Binned. Now it's all about the new, and even better, Japanese version of *Pro Evo 6*. Back of the net.

SENSIBLE SOCCER

X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME

"POORLY-EXECUTED AND SLOPPIER THAN A TODDLER EATING A JAM SANDWICH"

AEON FLUX, PAGE 92

LOCO ROCO

SHIN MEGAMI TENSAI: DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA

PLAYING PS2 LONGER, HARDER, FASTER

DANIEL GRIFFITHS

"I intend to pass the five months between now and PS3's launch date asleep!" said Dan, before slumping at his desk. Dan, we need you to sign off the mag. Dan? Dan, wake up! Dan!

DANIEL DAWKINS

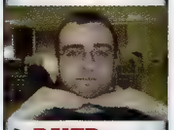
Dan returned from E3 saying he'd spend the tortuous five-month wait for PS3 trying to relive E3's glory by going on extravagant press trips every week. What's so new about that, then?

NATHAN IRVINE

"I will invent the time machine and skip the wait entirely," said Nathan. That's a good plan. How long will it take you to build one? "Oh, about five months." But... oh, go ahead. Whatever.

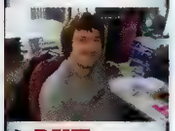
ANDREW KELLY

"Five months is nothing for a social butterfly like me," said Andy. "I'll just spend the time drinking and doing the YMCA dance." Again, what's so new about that, then?



DAVID COOK

"I shall spend the five month wait counting my body hairs," said Dave. Quite. How'll you see the ones on the back of your legs? "I own a full-length mirror. For my sexy posing nights." Hmm.



DAVE HARRISON

Dave was raised by monkeys, as you know. "Five months?" he said. "I'll trace my family tree. It's my theory that I'm part of the PG Tips chimp family. Tea?" No, ta.

PS2 REVIEWS THIS ISSUE

ACE COMBAT ZERO

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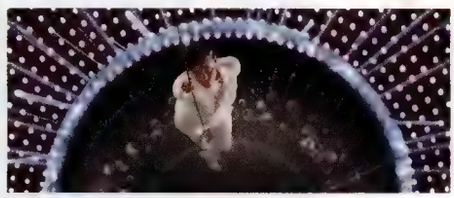

DVDS

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Jarhead pg115
Walk The Line pg115
Fun With Dick And Jane pg115

THE TRUTH

Every Game Ever Reviewed pg122

SanDisk — PSM2 use only Sandisk Memory Stick Pro Duo cards in their PSPs.

U.S.Robotics — PSM2 plays online wirelessly with US Robotics hardware

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Io Interactive
Publisher: Eidos
Players: 1
Memory Save: 2,199KB
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: Yes
Surround Sound: Yes

PREVIOUSLY IN PSM2...

"BLOOD MONEY'S CLEARLY THE BEST HITMAN YET."

PSM2#75

GAMEFAX

Action
Violent
Hard
Sequel

TRIVBURST

- 13 (unlucky for your victims) missions.
- (Almost entirely set in the USA (plus Chile and Paris).
- The series gets a fully controllable camera for first time. (Yay!)

TOP 5 HITMEN

- Leon
- Mr Goodkat
- Nikita
- Ghost Dog
- Martin Blank

GAMEPIE

30% Careful planning.
40% Sneaking and killing.
10% Waiting for the death animation to end.
15% Changing disguises.
5% Reading newspapers.

PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"David Bateson, the actor who voices 47, is not only the spitting image of Hitman but also had a role in Lars Von Trier's depresso-fest, Breaking The Waves."

HITMAN™

BLOOD MONEY

Splash the cash – *Blood Money*'s brilliant.

PSM2 GAME OF THE MONTH

H*itman: Blood Money* is a sick, sick game. We suspected as much after playing the training mission, but now that the credits have finally rolled, we're sure of it. How developers get away with this kind of thing is beyond us. We feel sullied by the experience – changed, even. You see, a lifetime of playing videogames has given us an unquenchable thirst for instant gratification with no thought for the consequences – bloody gunfights, wall to wall explosions, steaming plates of gung-ho for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and a moral compass so bent that needle points *up*. And *Blood Money* promised more of the same. You're a paid assassin for pity's sake. Sam Fisher may be a killer too, but at least he can say he's doing his bit to protect the free world while he's waist deep in liberty-hating terrorist guts. But playing through Agent 47's latest stealthy whack 'em-up has left us with, (and there's no nice way to say this), unpleasantly virtuous feelings. We've developed patience; professionalism suddenly means something; we know how to plan ahead and delay pleasure... worst of all (and please don't judge) we've started taking pride in our work. What is the world coming to? You know, if it wasn't for all the poisoning, garrotting, stabbing, crushing, exploderising, electrocuting, and, yes, shooting, *Blood Money* would have to be reclassified as educational software. Mercifully, as it is, Agent 47's third outing on PS2 isn't just the best *Hitman* game yet, but it's possibly the best stealth game *ever* on PS2. Just mull that over for a second or two. Take your time, we'll meet you in the next paragraph...

"NOT JUST THE BEST HITMAN YET, BUT POSSIBLY THE BEST STEALTH GAME EVER ON PLAYSTATION 2"

Let's be clear about something, for all its brilliance, *Blood Money* doesn't dump the series template in a shallow grave and start over from scratch. If you've played either the last game, *Contracts* (good) or its predecessor *Silent Assassin* (better) you'll feel instantly at home here. You're still Agent 47, a bald impeccably-suited and booted clone assassin working for 'The Agency', taking whack jobs around the globe for six figure paydays. You've still got a variety of conventional weapons (including 47's beloved, customised dual Silverballer handguns) and environmental killing implements (a carpenter's nail gun, a sous chef's knife, etc) and, as ever, stealing clothes and changing disguises on the fly is still integral to mission success. And naturally, you've still got the suspicion meter bottom left on the screen, gauging just how successfully you're keeping a low profile. What *Blood Money* does, though, is refine the *Hitman* concept to its purest expression yet, and in doing so raises the bar for all other sneak-'em-ups. In earlier outings, developer Io Interactive tried to give gamers of all tastes freedom to create their own style of *Hitman* game – twitch gamers could use a hammer to open an egg and recklessly blow and blast their way to mission success. On the other hand, those after the

MARDI GRAAAAGGHH! With 47 in New Orleans for Mardi Gras, damp cellars are the least of the locals' worries...

The MON£¥ $HOT

The Murder Of Crows mission starts in a New Orleans bar. Then you go outside and everything changes. The streets are packed, creating the most atmospheric environment in the game. Brilliant.

prized Silent Assassin rating could meticulously scout, plan and execute (literally) their mission without raising a single alarm.

With *Blood Money*, however, Io has taken the bold (but smart) decision to remove choice from the high-body count gangbangers and give it all to the stealthy professionals. That's not to say that 47 can't sometimes successfully 'go loud' to get the job done, but it's not where the game's enormous, core satisfaction lies. By making bull in a china shop murderising harder to pull off, and by secreting so many clever and innovative routes to subtle mission success in the game's beautifully designed maps, Io has polarised *Hitman*'s appeal and ramped up the pleasure gamers can derive from exercising intelligence, and carefully setting up the perfect, untraceable kill.

And a good thing too, because there really isn't another game experience like *Hitman* out there, even among sneak-'em-ups. *Metal Gear Solid* has camouflage, but *Blood Money*'s disguises make for a much deeper (and often hilarious) way to throw others off the scent. How much harder is it to invisibly cap a Mafia snitch in bland suburbia than take out soldiers in a war zone? Plus, where else would you neutralise targets dressed as a children's party clown, a giant red budgie, a hillbilly-wedding guest, Santa Claus or the devil himself? *Splinter Cell* has its light and sound meters, but *Blood Money*'s suspicion meter trumps them both. It's less clinical for one thing, and it relies on you giving 47 the appearance of unhurried normality to everyone else, while secretively planning focused moments of calculated violence. If there's a more satisfying payoff in a game than calmly strolling through the aftermath of flawlessly executed hit right in front of your enemies with the suspicion meter barely even flickering into green, then we'd certainly love to hear about it.

However, the trade off for that immense satisfaction is a lot of initial trial and error. But don't worry, this is how *Blood Money* is supposed

"BLOOD MONEY RAISES THE BAR FOR ALL SNEAK-'EM-UPS"

"AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...VIN DIESEL?"

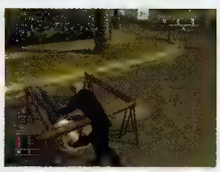
Vin 'XxX' Diesel has been cast as suave Agent 47 for the movie of *Hitman*. Still, Mr Producer, how about these guys for the sequel? We reckon they'd all be pretty good.

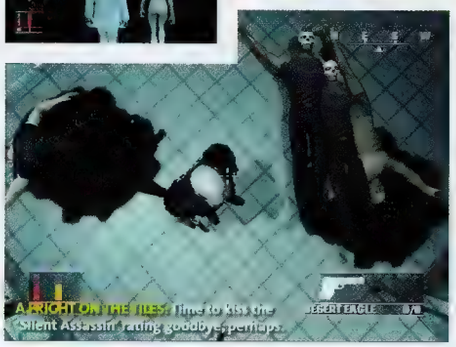
BRUCE WILLIS
Bald (excellent start), hard as anvils and good at playing the strong silent, psychopathic types. He probably has his own guns too. Age is the only concern. ///

JASON STATHAM
As Transporters 1 and 2 have shown, the former Mr Kelly Brook has more than enough skill to tackle 47 on the big screen. Would give Hitman a certain likeability too. ////

VIGGO MORTENSEN
Stick with us on this. Lop off his hair and Aragorn actually looks very like Agent 47. Plus, unlike some, Viggo has been known to do some, y'know serious *acting*. /////

Photos: Rex





DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION

Just because 47 likes changing disguises every five minutes, it doesn't mean he's hard to spot in a crowd. Anything but, sometimes. Here are our favourites from his selection of temporary threads...

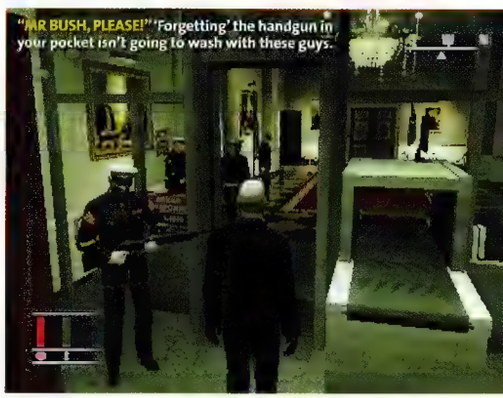
THE CLOWN: With echoes of Roger Moore in Octopussy, 47 uses the cover of a kids' party to infiltrate a Mafia squealer's semi. The downside to this disguise is that your escape vehicle may 'hilariously' fall apart when you start it up...

THE BIG BIRD: This has to be a one-off right? Wrong. In the New Orleans, Murder Of Crows mission there are three different bird costumes. You'd be surprised how few people expect to get assassinated by a giant red budgie.

SANTA CLAUS: Have you been naughty or nice? That's totally irrelevant. This Santa's crashing a high profile porn party in the Rocky mountains and is dreaming of a red Christmas. Ho, ho... blam!

REDNECK: Complete with braces, trucker cap and an eye that wanders whenever your sister walks past. This is one of the best disguises in the game since you're only likely to get stopped if you're *not* carrying a shotgun.

"IN WHICH OTHER GAME COULD YOU NEUTRALISE TARGETS WHILE DRESSED AS A GIANT RED BUDGIE?"



to work – dying a lot and restarting on your way to flawless kills, although admittedly occasionally wearisome if it happens too often, is all part of the enjoyment. Baby steps. AI is, with very few exceptions, scalpel sharp and virtually every mission has at least one difficulty bottleneck that will try your patience as you repeatedly test alternative approaches. In a brilliant later mission set in the White House, for example, we spent a good half an hour simply working out how to get past initial security at the front door. (In case you're wondering it involved getting a tourist carted away with our Silverballers in her briefcase, blowing up a remote mine on an alarmed display case in the White House museum, stealing a guide's uniform in the staff showers and then sedating a marine, stealing *his* uniform and heading for the roof. Still, no doubt you'll find scores of other ways to do it, and therein lies *Blood Money*'s genius and immense replay value.)

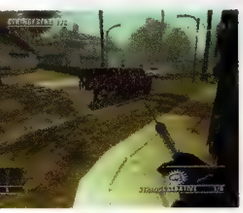
CASHING IN

Stuck? Then why not use some of your dirty money to buy Intel on the mission at hand? Hmmm, that chandelier *is* hanging in a useful spot. Why would I care that the First Lady meets her lover in the East Wing drawing room? Oh, *right*. The unknown target has a booming voice, you say? *Interesting*.

In fact, *Blood Money* is a very appropriate subtitle, because this time around, your money works a lot harder for you than ever before. Not only can you buy sly pointers on how to complete your mission in unexpected ways, but you can also splash the cash on a world of upgrades for 47's core arsenal, including laser sights, accurate flechette rounds for shotguns, silencers, armour piercing rounds and carbon fibre barrels for your W2000 sniper rifle. And there's a final use for your money that's tied into the new, superbly conceived, notoriety system.

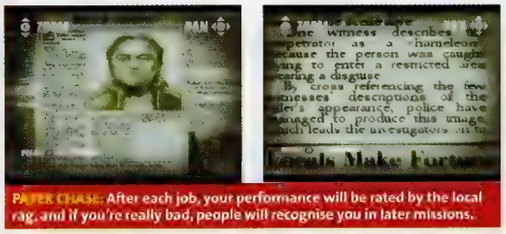
At the end of each mission you get a breakdown of your performance that shows how many witnesses clocked you, headshots, close kills, innocents slain, that kind of thing. All of these factors can affect your notoriety in subsequent missions, and the results are displayed in the form of the front page of a local newspaper on the day following your job. There, among clever side stories that reveal plot details, you'll find the press report of your mission woven into a unique news story that reveals either how professional or idiotically ham-fisted your performance was. Trust us, it's not long before seeing the words 'amateur' or 'lunatic' will have your cheeks burning with shame. See what we meant about pride in your work?

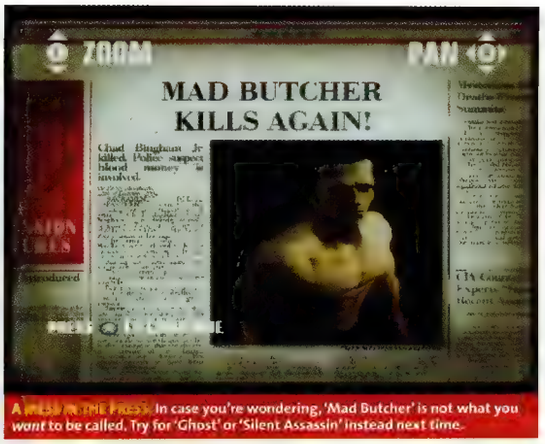
FOWL PLAY: Agent 47 does his bit to stem the spread of avian bird flu.



"HOLD THE FRONT AAAGGHHH..."

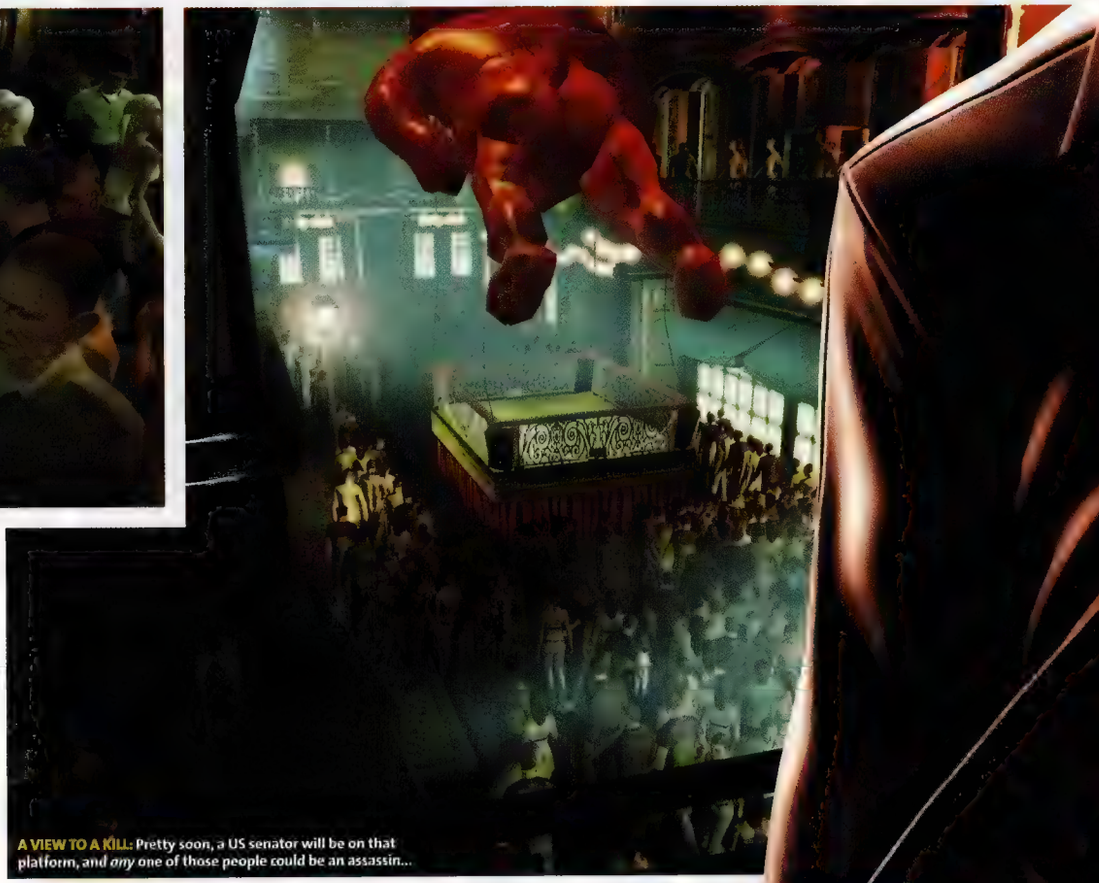
By cleverly incorporating the statistics from your completed missions, *Blood Money* creates a unique news story that reveals just how skilful (or otherwise) your last performance was. "Unskilled with firearms"? "Running around screaming like a little girl"? How do these journalists sleep? Filthy tabloid scum.


PAPER CHASE: After each job, your performance will be rated by the local rag, and if you're really bad, people will recognise you in later missions.



A MESS IN THE PRESS: In case you're wondering, 'Mad Butcher' is not what you *want* to be called. Try for 'Ghost' or 'Silent Assassin' instead next time.

"IS THIS SOME KIND OF BUST?" Don't get distracted 47 – there's a mysterious female killer on your tail.


A VIEW TO A KILL: Pretty soon, a US senator will be on that platform, and *any* one of those people could be an assassin...

However, even if you do screw up, all is not lost. By spending enormous amounts of cash you can bribe bystanders, police chiefs or (if you've really dropped a bollock) buy a new identity to repair the worst of the damage. Not that we ever needed that, you understand... [cough]

There are other innovations in *Blood Money* to complement the notoriety system and increasingly useful currency. Chief of these is the implementation of a fully controllable camera for the first time. We can't emphasis enough just how much freedom and flexibility this gives you, enabling 47 to (literally) look the other way while detonating mines, scouting locations and generally getting the lie of the land. What else? Well, split-screen effects now give you an insight into key events occurring elsewhere in the often-complex maps, while 47 will now automatically hide an unholstered weapon from approaching civilians. He can also now take advantage of environmental hazards for speculative kills (pushing people off balconies, down stairs, um, into furnaces on Mississippi paddle steamers).

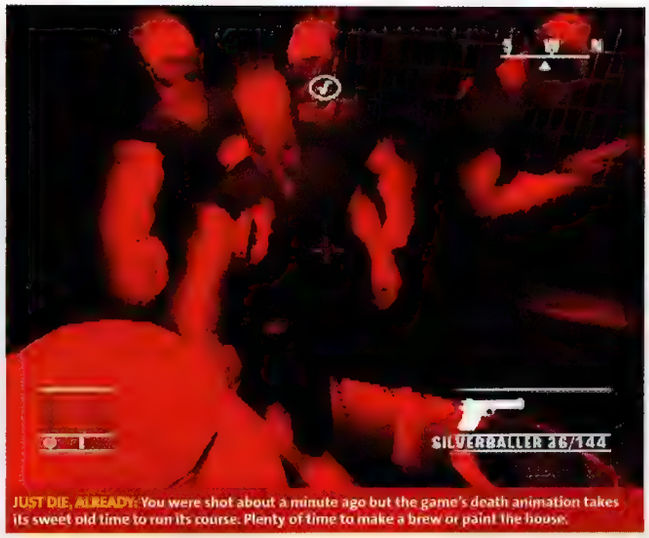
BEAUTY IN DEATH

As for standout moments, there really are too many to list. However, for sheer staggering visuals, the *enormous* crowd scenes in the New Orleans Mardi Gras mission are unforgettable. Similarly, the level design of the Las Vegas-set A Dance With The Devil is incredible, with twin heaven and hell parties taking place on the top floor and basement of a gigantic office block respectively. Oh, and *Blood Money*'s ending is an absolute corker. 'Utterly stunning' is the best way to describe it.

"A BRILLIANT SWANSONG FOR THE HITMAN SERIES ON PS2"

"WITH THIS RING, I THEE DEAD, SORRY, WED."

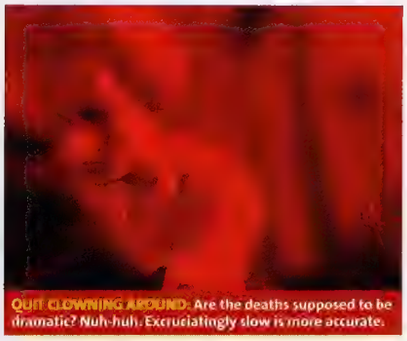
ONE WEDDING AND TWO FUNERALS: Ordinarily, 47's suit would be perfect for a wedding reception, but we're in Deliverance country, so time to 'borrow' a guest's threads. It's rude not to bring a gift, so we steal one and give it a personal touch – with an anti-personnel mine. The groom keeps coming out to the lawn to fire his gun into the air, so we plant our present nearby and detonate it. Now for the bride's Pa. We pick a lock and gain access to the house. We sedate a guard and take his clothes. After that, we find pappy chilling in his room. With security right outside, we inject the inbred lunk with poison and leisurely stroll back to our speedboat...



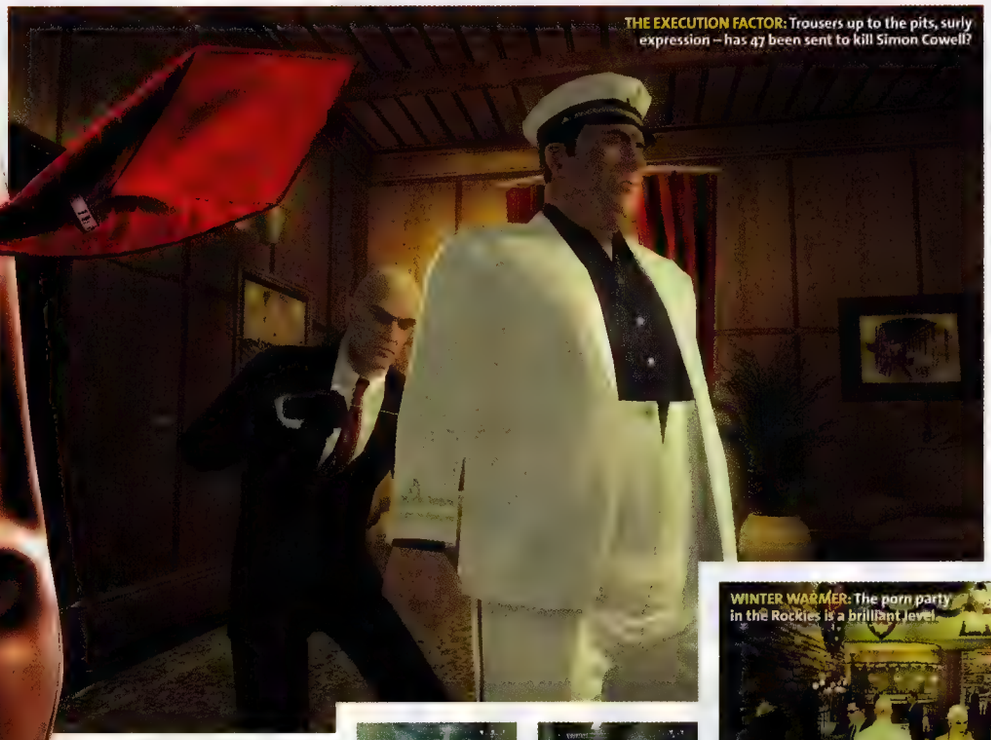
JUST DIE, ALREADY: You were shot about a minute ago but the game's death animation takes its sweet old time to run its course. Plenty of time to make a brew or paint the house.

SLOW AND PAINFUL DEATHS

The biggest gripe about *Blood Money*, is the utterly, excruciatingly slow death animations. And yes, you *have* to sit through one every single time that you cark it. Urge to kill rising...



QUIT CLOWNING AROUND: Are the deaths supposed to be dramatic? Nuh-huh. Excruciatingly slow is more accurate.



THE EXECUTION FACTOR: Trousers up to the pits, surly expression – has 47 been sent to kill Simon Cowell?

WINTER WARMER: The porn party in the Rockies is a brilliant level.

When it comes to failings, *Blood Money* keeps a relatively clean sheet, but it's not without a few grating moments. Given the reliance on restarting from save points over and over again, the fact that the death animation takes about as long as the average state funeral to play out, while giving you no option to restart, is an unnecessary, teeth-grinding irritation. Also, while having a slew of customised weapons sounds like a brilliant feature, in practice, aside from your silenced Silverballers it's a very rare mission that'll see you choosing to take anything larger or louder; not least because you carry your best undetectable weapons (poison and sedation syringes, fibre-wire garrotte, remote mines) into every mission by default. For our money, Io could have stripped out the additional weapons altogether and *Blood Money* would have lost very little.

However, these are pretty much minor quibbles. This is a fantastic stealth action game – at once challenging, exhausting (your adrenaline will spike throughout) exhilarating and utterly addictive. What's more, it delivers some of the best mission maps we've seen, all dressed up in some of the finest visuals that PS2 has ever been tasked to produce. It's the last *Hitman* game we'll see on PS2 and, as they say, what a way to go. And now let's wait and see just what Io Interactive can rustle up for PlayStation 3. Frankly, we just can't wait... **Paul Fitzpatrick**

■ *Hitman Blood Money is out now.*

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Superb level and mission design. – A lot of trial and error, with slow restarts.	+ Great style and design. Outstanding. – Sometimes, the lighting isn't quite spot on.	+ Kickass voice acting and moody score – The music can be really quite intrusive.

LIFESPAN

Unless you're after a Lunatic rating, a first playthrough will take a good 10-13 hours. Replay value, though, is enormous

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
HITMAN CONTRACTS

IT'S WORSE THAN...
METAL GEAR SOLID 3

Even compared to previous *Hitman* games, *Blood Money* feels focused, fresh and utterly compelling. You owe it to yourself to play this.

9/10

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Z-Axis
Publisher: Activision
Players: 1
Memory Save: 58KB
Widescreen: Yes
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

QUESTION...

Which of the X-Men superheroes fought the Nazis during World War II on the fictional island of Madripoor?

PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Virginia ranger Roy Cleveland Sullivan was hailed a real-life X-Man before he committed suicide in 1983. He'd survived a record seven lightning strikes."

GAMEFAX

Action
Film Tie-In
Superhero
Official License

TRIVBURST

- Hugh Jackman and Patrick Stewart head-up X-Men's voice-acting cast
- The game's plot forms the back-story of new superhero movie X-Men: The Last Stand.

COOL GUY: Iceman fights the villains with some... ice.

STEP ASIDE: Wolverine's missions are balls-out brawls.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

"THE COMICS ARE BETTER"

X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME

There are actually *three* things certain in life... death, taxes and slightly underwhelming X-Men games.

If there's one word that can sum up all the X-Men games that PS2 has played host to so far, it's "so-so". Be it *Rise Of Apocalypse*, *Next Dimension* or *Wolverine's Revenge*, they've all been *so-so*. OK. Reasonable. Acceptable. Each one scored in the high sixties or low seventies. We'd have liked this one to go that extra mile, but... well, it doesn't.

The game follows the plot of the movie, explaining why X-Men leader Professor X is gunning for Magneto. And aptly, it's something of a mutant, offering a hybrid of playing styles, each showcasing the talents of the three protagonists – Wolverine, Nightcrawler and Iceman.

On paper, this three-pronged structure is certainly a winner, with each of the characters busting up 28 episodic levels. Sadly, however, *X-Men: The Official Game* doesn't quite live up to its undoubted potential...

Firstly, Wolverine. His missions see you off on an enraged button-mashing spree, murderising all and sundry with your lethal claws and an expanding repertoire of melee moves. His levels are claustrophobic and busily peopled with projectile-toting enemies and close combat foes armed with claws, clubs and all manner of pointy objects of death. The battling is often wonderfully frantic and there's a healthy selection of death-dealing moves for Wolvey to perform.

Sadly, these levels are sullied by a few irritations. First off, a limited free camera mode cleverly reflects his blinkered approach to battle, but also means you can't always see lurking foes. Not good. What's more, his special powers are a mixed bag. On the one hand, his ability to fly into a rage of spitting death, leaping mercilessly onto his foes and ripping them to shreds, is a rewarding lifeline. But he doesn't need it – his ability to regenerate health gives you an incentive to run

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE...

Other X-Men heroes make cameo appearances as you use their powers to aid the quest of the main characters. In one section, while playing as Wolverine, you're joined by a floating Storm – you know, the one played by Halle Berry in the films. In addition to controlling the hairy Canadian wolfchild, pressing L3 unleashes Storm's area effect lightning attack and brings you as close to co-operative gaming as you'll get in *X-Men: TOG*.

Cyclops and Colossus also turn up to stick their mutant oars in – pity you can't get your hands on them as fully playable characters, mind.

TOP 5 MEN

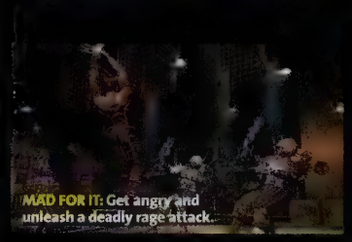
- Barry Scott (from the Cillit Bang adverts)
- Geoff Capes
- Bertie Bassett
- Lion-o from Thundercats
- Jesus

GAMEPIE

40% Mashing buttons.
25% Nightcrawler's acrobatics.
25% Ice slides.
10% Wishing for a multi-player mode.

ANSWER

Wolverine. He later joined the Canadian army and took part in the D-Day landings and the liberation of the Netherlands.

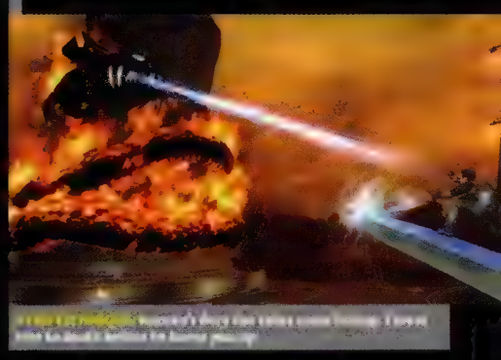


MAD FOR IT: Get angry and unleash a deadly rage attack.

ENEMIES IN A STATE

No sojourn into the X-Men universe would be complete without bumping into some familiar nasties, and there are plenty of villains to batter from the off.

The likes of fiery nut Pyro, Brotherhood boss man Magneto, is-it-wrong-to-fancy-her? super bitch Lady Deathstalker and clawing nasty Sabretooth all pitch up for a battle with our superheroes...



The MON£Y $HOT

Nightcrawler is the game's stand-out character, able to teleport behind foes and catching them off-guard. Smack! Crack! Ow!

away and hide. Hardly heroic. And, thanks to sometimes ultra-timid enemy AI, you can often duck behind a pillar and recuperate your full powers without being attacked. You wimp.

CRAWL ABOUT YOU

Talking of wimps, cowardliness is an essential part of Nightcrawler's persona. This cat-like hero is the most compelling character in the game. Using his teleport skills you can zoom around levels, accessing unreachable ledges, protecting your limited health bar from unwelcome assault or finding a quiet spot to heal. With his forked tail and well-animated padding movements, Nightcrawler's a pleasure to control. Pulling off wall-runs and planting yourself for flips off the scenery before zooming behind a distant enemy and materialising to kick his ass is ultra-liberating, as is his completely free camera. With slightly tighter level design, in which you didn't stumble into areas you're not yet supposed to find, Nightcrawler's missions could have been brilliant. Instead, by fitting into a general trend of short, episodic levels, they don't really give Nightcrawler a chance to stretch his mutated legs. Pity.

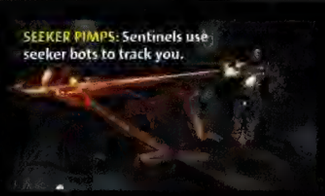
Iceman, then. Swooshing around on an ice-slide, blocking incoming attacks with an ice shield and firing out projectiles offers unsophisticated, but welcome respite from the largely ground-based action elsewhere. And smashing through your own ice trails and admiring the path you've painted onto the sky is suitably cool.

"ADMIRING THE ICE PATH YOU MADE IN THE SKY IS VERY COOL"

In fact, there's much to admire in *X-Men: TOG*'s style. Presentation-wise it rocks hard, and partially destructible environments testify to the physical power of the protagonists. Some levels feature welcome diversions from the basic gameplay mechanics, tossing in 'protect a pal' and 'lure someone to a fiery death segments, for instance. But for all that the single-player campaign is decent, there's a lack of multi-player options. Equally uninspiring is the handful of unlockable outfits and single-player challenges held up as flimsy incentives for those with an urge to horde.

Still, thanks to the game's undoubted Hollywood shine we really fancy seeing the movie now. So... job done? **Lee Hall**

■ *We're sensing X-Men is out now...*



SEEKER PIMPS: Sentinels use seeker bots to track you.

SEE PHWOAR: Expect explosive effects aplenty in the game.

SELFLESS? Iceman suffers from low self-esteem due to his small penis.

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ The three characters' styles provide variety. – Dogged by repetitive action.	+ Often busily peopled and slickly presented. – Wolverine's camera angles are off-putting.	+ Hollywood voice acting and score oozes class. – Slurs from your enemies will get you down.

LIFESPAN

The game relies almost entirely on the replay value of a single-player mode that's hardly epic.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION

IT'S WORSE THAN...
RISE OF APOCALYPSE

PlayStation.2

A solid, playable affair that suffers death by a thousand cuts in the form of too many niggling short-comings. Another so-so X-Men game, then.

70

INFOSTRIP

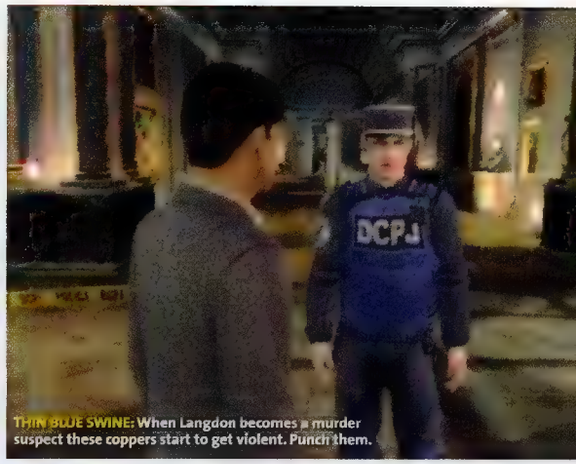
DETAILS
Developer: Collective
Publisher: Take 2
Players: 1
Memory Save: 323kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PREVIOUSLY IN PSM2...
"THIS COULD BE THE GREAT ADVENTURE THAT PS2 HAS BEEN CRYING OUT FOR"
PSM2#73

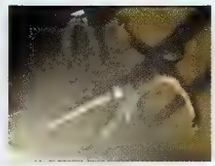
GAMEFAX
Official License
Adventure
Puzzle
Hard

TRIVBURST
- Control Sophie Neveu and Robert Langdon.
- Solve word puzzles to crack the mysterious code.
- Sneak past, run from and fight with the police along the way.

The MON£¥ $HOT
Robert Langdon's disgusting face is amazing. When he moves his mouth it's like watching a melting candle. His head is like an inside-out pork pie. He's the ugliest man in games and he makes us feel odd.



THIN BLUE SWINE: When Langdon becomes a murder suspect these coppers start to get violent. Punch them.



"NOT QUITE A WORK OF ART"

THE DA VINCI CODE

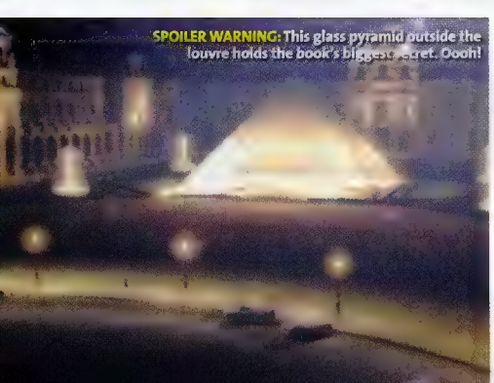
We've almost cracked the code! The last two clues are 'average' and 'incredibly'. Don't tell us, we'll get it...

The Da Vinci Code wants to sit alongside acclaimed adventure games like *Fahrenheit* and *Broken Sword* as an equal, but sadly it never will. Its biggest mistake is that it *feels* like a movie license – the sum of a collaboration between a publisher and a movie studio – rather than a standalone game designed by a team following their *own* vision of Dan Brown's novel. This makes it feel forced, sterile and creatively stunted, and any good ideas it does have are shamefully wasted on dull puzzles and infuriating combat.

Yeah, that's right – *combat*. It may look like a serious, chin-stroking kind of game, but plenty of fists go flying throughout 'hero' Robert Langdon's adventures in Paris, and mostly towards the faces of baffled gendarmes. Press ◎ to start a fight and a menu will appear. You can grapple for a bit, throw your opponent into walls or just smack them about with your feet and fists. Moves are pulled off via twiddles of the analogue stick or *God Of War*-style button presses and they really are quite brutal. Would a mild-mannered professor of religious symbology *really* flip a policeman over and punch him up the arse? Same goes for his partner Sophie Neveu who yelps "You'd better run away!" whilst mercilessly kicking a man's plums into *paste*. It's a surprisingly violent game. In fact, we half expected Langdon to cock an uzi and enter 'Grail Time', which would be sort of like bullet-time. "Are you a holy man?! YOU ARE NOW!" <ratatatat>

But what about the puzzles? This is, after all, a game/book/film built on the foundation of a cracking mystery involving secrets hidden in the paintings of Leonardo Da Caprio, who was one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (or something). Well, they're all right, really. Not terribly demanding but quite well put-together. Well, except for the decryption sections which are, frankly, a pain in the glands. Swapping letters around and switching ancient symbols with the

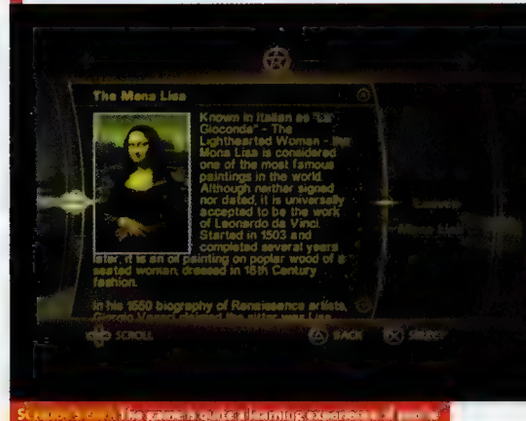
"WOULD A PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLOGY REALLY PUNCH A POLICEMAN UP THE ARSE?"


SPOILER WARNING: This glass pyramid outside the louvre holds the book's biggest secret. Oooh!

DATA RECOVERY

As you go through the game you collect documents and data on every element of the mystery. This is priceless if you've never read the books, or if you know nothing about art or history or anything like that. You can sift through hundreds of pages of text, reading up on the history of Da Vinci and the Louvré. Or you can just wing it, ignore most informative, but needless, pieces of info you come across and just focus on solving the puzzles.

FACT HUNT: If you've no idea where you are, read up on all of the game's levels in the archives for a detailed history. Educative!


The Mona Lisa
Known in Italian as "La Gioconda" - The Lighthearted Woman - the Mona Lisa is considered one of the most famous paintings in the world. Although neither signed nor dated, it is universally accepted to be the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Started in 1503 and completed several years later, it is an oil painting on poplar wood of a seated woman, dressed in 16th Century fashion.
In his 1550 biography of Renaissance artists,
SCROLL
BACK
SCHOOL'S OUT: The game's quite a learning experience if you're willing to read through page after page of text, of course.

TOP 5 CODES

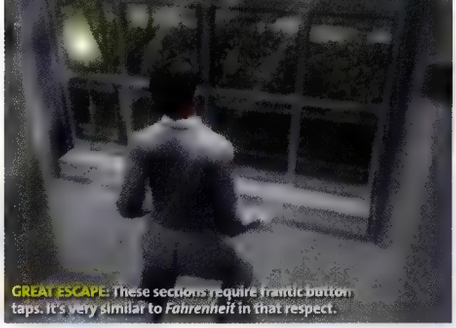
- Cheat codes
- Code in the hole
- Codes of conduct
- Coded Arms
- Depeche Code

GAMEPIE

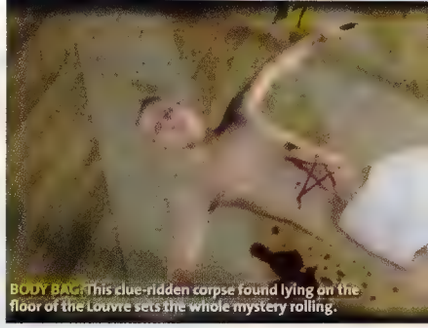
30% Codes
30% Fighting
20% Paintings
20% Monks

PUBTALK

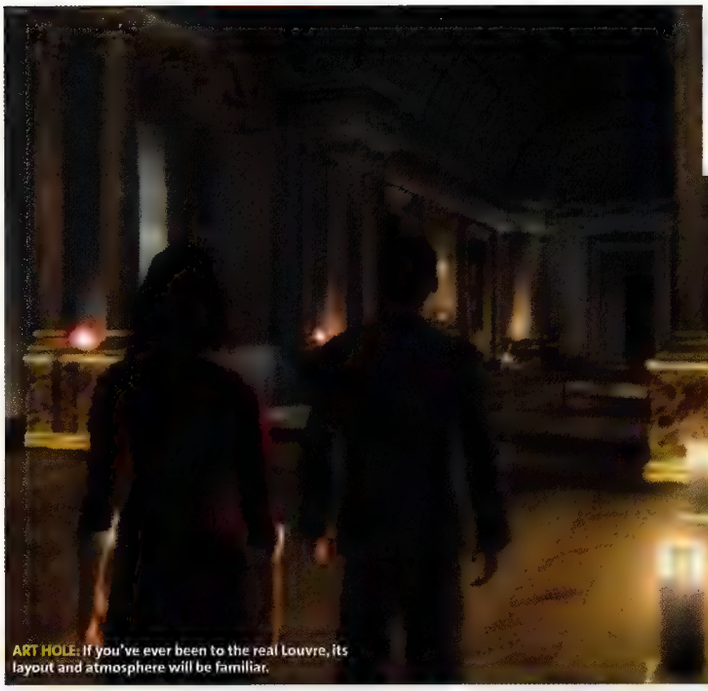
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Dan Brown's million-selling book supposes that The Mona Lisa is actually Leonardo Da Vinci in drag. The androgyny reflects the sacred union of male and female. Apparently."



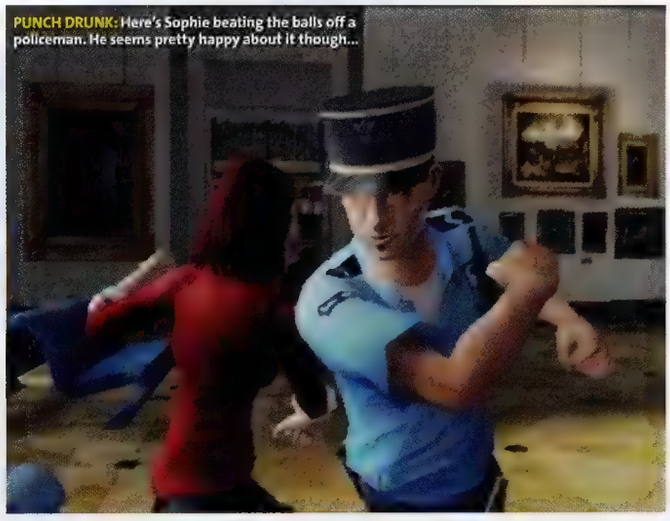
GREAT ESCAPE: These sections require frantic button taps. It's very similar to *Fahrenheit* in that respect.



BODY BAG: This clue-ridden corpse found lying on the floor of the Louvre sets the whole mystery rolling.



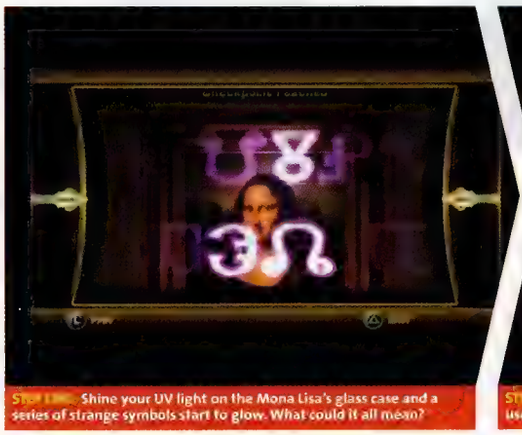
ART HOLE: If you've ever been to the real Louvre, its layout and atmosphere will be familiar.



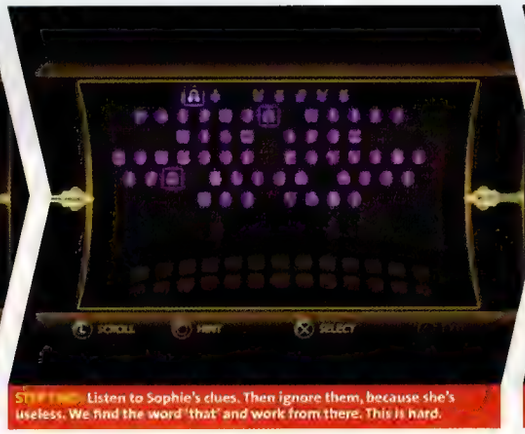
PUNCH DRUNK: Here's Sophie beating the balls off a policeman. He seems pretty happy about it though...

CRACKING THE CODE

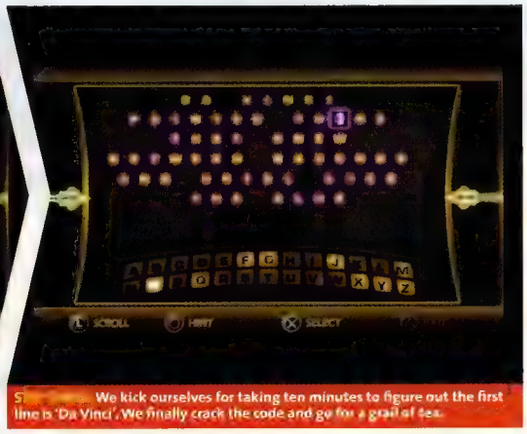
The puzzle below may look simple, but it took *five* of us to crack it. Not only were Sophie's clues utterly useless and vague, but moving the cursor around is a pain in the chops. We did it eventually, but it really stumped us at first. Are we idiots? Don't answer that.



STEP ONE: Shine your UV light on the Mona Lisa's glass case and a series of strange symbols start to glow. What could it all mean?



STEP TWO: Listen to Sophie's clues. Then ignore them, because she's useless. We find the word 'that' and work from there. This is hard.



STEP THREE: We kick ourselves for taking ten minutes to figure out the first line is 'Da Vinci'. We finally crack the code and go for a grail of tea.

modern alphabet made our feeble brains sting. Other non-decryption puzzles are very *Resident Evil* and require you to combine items, read clues, solve riddles and run back and forth flicking switches. These are better than the fighting bits, but they still lack the ingenuity of, to give one example, an example that we'll keep on giving you because the games are so ruddy similar, *Broken Sword*.

THE ELEPHANT MAN

It's quite strong visually. Well, the locations are anyway. Robert Langdon, the lead character, looks like an Action Man that's been attacked with a soldering iron. His distorted, gurning face is actually one of the most repulsive things we've ever seen. Why couldn't they get Tom Hanks' likeness? We'd have much preferred to look at ol' Tom's smooth, mild mush instead of this cock-eyed, shuddering lunatic. Sophie is no better. Instead of the frankly gorgeous Audrey Tatou, her face has more in common with one of those squawking trolls from *Lord Of The Rings*. But, as we said, the locations are fantastic. The louvré looks stunning, as do the various other locations you'll visit. It *feels* like Europe. It's just a shame the characters look like clumps of mince propped up with bits of plank.

RUNNING SCARED: See the dead naked guy up there? This is him pre-murder in the intro movie.

If we're honest, there's nothing immediately wrong with *Da Vinci Code*. But the fact that it 'works' doesn't mean it's good. There are too many puzzles that require extended periods of running back and forward pressing ⊗ at objects and watching cut-scenes. It wouldn't be so bad if said cut-scenes were interesting, but instead, we have to watch Langdon's twisted fizzog emotionlessly go through a script that, while fine if read by charismatic actors like Hanks and Tatou, sounds like a shopping list in a game. It *is* one of the best movie licenses in a long time, though, but with *Aeon Flux* and *Fantastic Four* as competition, that statement holds little meaning.

If you've read the book and seen the film then there's very little point in buying this. If you've never read the book or seen the film, then it might be worth renting, just to see what all the fuss is. You'll uncover the mysteries without having to read the book, which is perfect if you don't do books. But given the choice of all these things, we'd go and see the film. And not just because Audrey Tatou, who's hotter than lava, is in it. *The Da Vinci Code* is decent, certainly, but it's really no *Broken Sword*. **Andy Kelly**

■ The Da Vinci Code *is out now.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ A reasonably diverting affair, all in all. – The fighting is a bit awkward sometimes.	+ The locations are spectacular. – The characters look like monsters.	+ Atmospheric sound effects. – Some of the music sounds like Enya.

LIFESPAN

Unlike the book, which would take you a week or so, you'll blast through this in about ten hours.

MINUTES

IT'S BETTER THAN...
AEON FLUX

IT'S WORSE THAN...
BROKEN SWORD

Not a terrible film license, but not a very good one either. The odd clever puzzle is overshadowed by rubbish fighting bits. Watch the film or read the book.

6/8

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Milestone
Publisher: Black Bean
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 120KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"The Bullet car in *San Andreas* is clearly a clone of the Ford GT."

GAMEPIE
40% Driving slower than you'd like.
10% Switching off mentally.
50% Playing *Gran Turismo* instead.

GAMEFAX
Driving — Realistic
Wheel — Hard

TRIVBURST
- Lots of cars, including roadsters, coupes and the Pagani Zonda.
- Tracks range from Barca to Hockenheim to the Highlands. Woo.

The MONEY SHOT
It's the Cote d'Azur grand prix. Obviously. There are lots of tracks, but the game never really feels different wherever you're actually racing.

"NEEDS A BIT LONGER TO EVOLVE"

EVOLUTION GT

So-so racing game *S.C.A.R* gets a so-so sequel. The world looks up indifferently, then goes about its business.

We question why *Evolution GT* actually exists. It's the sequel to *S.C.A.R* for a start – the underwhelming Alfa Romeo-based racing game – and there certainly haven't been hordes of desperate *S.C.A.R* fans clamouring for another heady fix of humdrum racing action. Then there's the fact that it's going head to head with both *Gran Turismo* and *Toca*, except that's the equivalent of Mike Tyson being challenged to a rumble by Wee Jimmy Krankie. It doesn't let you upgrade the cars, thus maddening off the modders, and it's not that fast, thus boring the boy racers. And it hasn't really evolved all that much since *S.C.A.R*. You can't help but wonder why it's even on the shelves.

Which isn't to say it's actually a bad game. It's not – it's just blindingly average. Start a career, choose a car (there are a selection this time, so you're not stuck with the Alfa Romeos as in the previous game), potter around the GT courses of Barcelona or Berlin or wherever, discover that it's a pretty damn difficult game (made harder by the fact that if you even clip the edge of a grass verge, you've a good chance of spinning completely out of control, therefore making you terrified to take otherwise tempting-looking short-cuts), trundle over the finish line and then do it again. And that's it – except for *Evolution GT*'s 'unique selling point'.

ROAD RAGE

Except it's not that unique, because *S.C.A.R* did it first. Still, as you're driving, you'll find you're able to 'intimidate' other cars by driving really closely and aggressively. This might mean they'll panic and crash, or it could mean they'll fight back and start ramming into you. It's a nice feature, in fact, and works surprisingly well. You can also rewind time, *Prince Of Persia*-style, should you make any sickening cock-ups mid-race and turn your pristine Audi into scrap – in a feature the game terms the 'Tiger Effect', for some reason. This can only be done occasionally, however, as you'll need to then drive like a pro to recharge your Tiger Effect bar.

There's a degree of fun to be had here, and it's better than *S.C.A.R* if only because you're not stuck driving just the one type of racer. It's certainly not easy, so winning races is satisfying because you really do have to drive well, and the AI of the computer cars is convincing. But it's just so uninvolving and, before you know it, you'll be losing races purely because your mind wandered and you started thinking about checking your MySpace account or whether to have a cheese or a fruit scone with your tea. *Evolution GT* has little atmosphere, little polish, little sense of speed and little reason to exist – especially in a world with *Gran Turismo* and *Toca* already in it. **David Cook**

■ Evolution GT *is out now.*

DRIVING LESSON

The best thing about *Evo GT* is its tutorial mode, as it's presented by real racer Gabriele Tarquini, reading from the worst script since Showgirls. "The best drivers know what's going to happen – *before* it happens! It's like magic!" he says, keeping a straight face while adding, "Now show me *your* magic!" Still, even though he said we'd had a "great race" after we'd totalled our car on the first lap, we'll never forget Tarquo's advice. Remember – "nothing's better than a good overtaking". Nothing.

LIP SERVICE: The lip synching is way off, though. And didn't his mother warn him that if the wind changes, he's stuck like this?

PSM VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ The cars handle quite realistically... – ...until you clip a verge and they go bananas.	+ Crisp and clear. They do the job. – But they're far from spectacular.	+ Passable enough engine noises. – Nothing really stands out in any way.

LIFESPAN
If you enjoy *Evolution GT*, it's certainly big and hard enough [cough] to keep you going for a long time. But that's a big 'if'.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN... S.C.A.R
IT'S WORSE THAN... TOCA 3

Evolution GT **is *just about* OK, but seems determined never to excite in any way. If racing games were Sunday night TV shows, this one would be Heartbeat.**

5

PQ

Practical Intelligence Quotient™

Think Inside The Box

Introducing the next generation of intelligent puzzle games. PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient is the first PSP™ game that measures quick thinking and logic aptitude.

Based on psychological research by Dr. Masuo Koyasu of Kyoto University, Japan. Your PQ score will be determined by how quickly and effectively you solve each physical problem. Post your scores online and compare your ranking against players worldwide.

PlayStation Portable

NOWPRO

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INFOSTRIP DETAILS
Developer: Namco
Publisher:
Players:
Memory:
Surround Sound:
50/60Hz:
Widescreen:

QUESTION
In the game, the Belkans [illegible]

GAMEFAX

SUNDANCE FESTIVAL: Clever use of blur effects create skies that heave with beauty.

BOXING SCIENCE: The ground looks OK from way up high, but get too close and it's an eyesore.

"A SERIES THAT'S SAVED BY THE BELKANS?"

ACE COMBAT ZERO THE BELKAN WAR

This dogfighting prequel's certainly no kick in the Belkans. Time to take to the skies once more.

People often ask why *Ace Combat* games don't feature chaff (as in the mass of metal and plastic you use to distract missiles, not the mass of Argos jewellery that typically worn around town centres). Namco will argue that it's because ace combatants don't need it. The Icemen and Mavericks of console skies laugh in the face of peril, and in doing so cast such a radiant gleam from their polished teeth that both rockets and pilots fly blindly into nearby hillsides.

But PC-playing, plane sim-loving critics of this series will argue that DualShock pads and TV screens don't deserve such clever gimmicks. Arcade air combat games, they say, should stay in arcade airspace.

But *Ace Combat*'s tactic has always been to distract you from its simple gameplay rather than even try to convince you that it's great. *Ace Combat Zero* (the sixth in a series so old it's apparently forgotten how to count) uses every trick in the book to stop you asking, "Hold on, how come I'm destroying the same tent for the thousandth time?" Shaky-cam replays, cheery Japlish radio chatter, roaring sound, live-action cut-scenes and nifty optical effects form a smokescreen of "oohs" and "aahs" around missions that, with a few exceptions, do nothing you haven't seen before in the series. In this sense, the game actually has chaff coming out of its ears.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

"A GREAT ADVERT FOR WHAT PLAYSTATION 2 CAN ACHIEVE IN ITS BUS PASS YEARS"

TRIVBURST

- The game takes place [illegible]

DOT.NET

Do you love Ace Combat [illegible]

GAMEPIE

TOP FIVE ACES

- Ace [illegible]
- Ace [illegible]
- Ace [illegible]
- Ace Of Aces
- [illegible]

ANSWER...

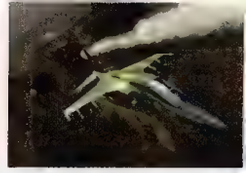
because [illegible]

Import Reviews

PLAYED TO DESTRUCTION BY PS2 EXPERTS

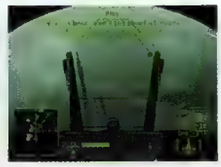
COUGHING UP FURBALLS: Dogfights can get pretty hectic, and we're glad to say it never slows down.

FOX TWO: The chase with which missiles can be locked on and fired home is an *After Burner* trait.



UNDER THE BLOOD RED SKY

For many, there's only one thing to know about multi-player in *Ace Combat Zero*, and it ain't good – the game still has no online modes. At least there are plenty of offline challenges to keep you ticking over and, as has become the series' standard, they're an eclectic bunch. Bonus point flags add an element of strategy to the standard deathmatch, as do ring tunnels and terrain features such as skyscrapers and canyons. Best is a furball dogfight featuring dozens of AI opponents; if that can one day be taken online and populated entirely with human adversaries, it really would take our breath away.



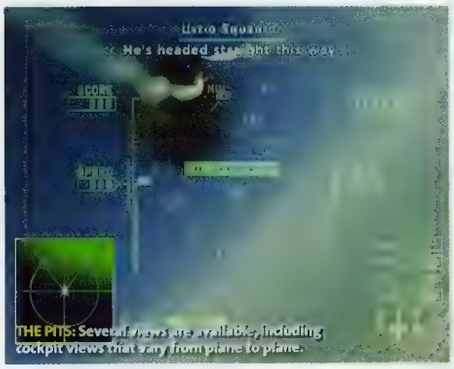
KNOW YOUR ENEMY: Dynamite cut-scenes introduce your ace rivals, who become increasingly dangerous as missions progress.

MERCENARY ME

Much of the chaff is the game's story, which series fans will recognise as both a prequel (by some 15 years) to the last game and a typically rough-hewn analogy of real world events. Belka, a country stricken by economic depression and governed by an opportunist fascist regime, has invaded its neighbours in order to secure their rich reserves of natural resources. One of these – the Republic of Ustio – is so unprepared that it turns to an air force of foreign mercenaries for protection, two of which happen to be you and your wingman, Pixy (you only get to command one other pilot this time). Cue a melodramatic tale of victory snapped from the jaws of defeat, wrapped around the most undemanding yet glamorous aerial combat since, well, *Ace Combat 5*.

Does the distraction tactic work this time? Not really, because unlike those previous episodes – the fourth one especially – the smokescreen here isn't thick enough to draw your attention, and what lies beneath is far from perfect. Take the replays. Sure, they're a great advert for what PS2 can achieve in its bus pass years, and were Iron Eagle III a movie about tracing a dozen figures-of-eight in the air before swooping down to blow up some cardboard boxes, then they'd be shot-for-shot identical. But really, what is the point? Likewise, those cut-scenes, in which much gum is chewed and sky gawped at, do little to stir up any real sense of drama. It's as if someone watched Pearl Harbor, took a shine to its music video airs (itself a crime) and shoehorned them into a videogame with all the moviemaking talent of, say, the average videogame engineer.

Trivial concerns, you might say. Most replays are little more than storefront showcases, after all, and for every *Onimusha 3* there are a dozen other FMV sequences that make For Your Thighs Only look like Schindler's List. But so long as it stays true to that same basic routine of fire-and-forget strafes and dogfights, *Ace Combat* asks to be judged as much for these details – how it *presents* its action – as for the quality of the action itself.



THE PITS: Several views are available, including cockpit views that vary from plane to plane.

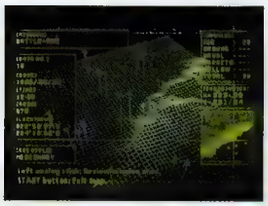
DODGE CITY: From the halfway point onwards, the action steps up with furious exchanges of missiles.

As it happens, the core gameplay isn't actually as bad as we've given you cause to expect. This is to say that locking a diamond inside a rectangle and squeezing the trigger as the HUD goes "bip-bip-beeeeep" can still be a lot of fun, no matter how pedestrian it can sometimes be. As is series tradition, many of the game's missions end with a boss battle – against a squadron of aces or some other menace – and seeing a rival make the fatal mistake of flattening out their trajectory as you bank round behind them, missiles locked and loaded, is a pretty timeless pleasure.

Being asked to do it all over again, however, because you were so bored of blasting SAM batteries and tanks that you passed out at the controls and flew directly into a house isn't quite so enjoyable. It happens a lot, because *Ace Combat Zero* features no checkpoints whatsoever, in missions that can easily last over half an hour.

"IT'S AS IF SOMEONE SAW PEARL HARBOR'S MUSIC VIDEO AIRS AND SHOEHORNED THEM INTO A GAME"

LOCKDOWN: Money earned in combat can be used to purchase increasingly accurate missiles.



The MON£¥ $HOT

Ace Combat Zero certainly looks amazing, chucking planes and explosions about with ease. Terrific stuff.

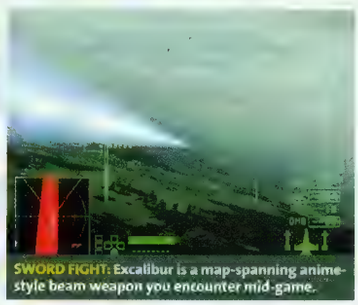
FEVER PITCH: The controls may be simple, but frantic rolls become the key to staying alive.

REVERSE THRUST: Replays certainly look the part, but they lose their appeal after a few missions.

THE MILE HIGH CLUB

***Ace Combat*'s planes get better every time, and with *Zero* they've reached genre-topping standard. Authentic both inside and out, the MiGs, F-15s and other assorted interceptors and tank killers are the game's best rewards for continued play. As ever, they don't handle quite as distinctly as they should, at least not within the separate classes, but with over 30 available options – three special weapons apiece – we're not complaining.**

HASTA LA VISTA: The Terminator is all you really need to walk the game, so get saving early on.



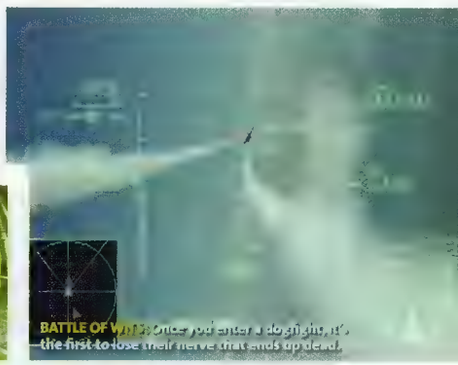
SWORD FIGHT: Excalibur is a map-spanning anime-style beam weapon you encounter mid-game.

There are plenty of moments where a boss or set-piece will blow you apart with a freak flurry of shots that sends you right back to square one, albeit with a better understanding of how Anthony Edwards must have felt when that cockpit canopy took issue with his head in Top Gun. Some missions you won't mind repeating because the game does have its creative moments, not least when its allied characters go gung-ho over their radios as enemy infantry flip out into theirs. When it successfully brings together these audio highlights with the more outrageous encounters you'd expect of a Japanese title (one boss is a giant beam weapon than fires at you from across the entire game map), *Ace Combat* defiantly proves that, when it's on form, very few do it better. If only it was able to strike that form just a little more often.

A BIT PLANE

If there's one format for arcade flying that seems to work well in the home, it's *Ace Combat*'s, although on PS2 its rivals are rather few and far between. But despite the technical sheen present throughout, this particular *Ace Combat* episode is something of a shaky one. It's neither broken nor particularly bad overall, but it seems somewhat confused as to exactly which aspects of gameplay need work and which don't. Unfortunately, Namco, we have some slightly sobering news for you – they all do, and a series in its sixth iteration should be far more on point than this. But given a decent length of time back in the hangar, we've little doubt that the series will be able to thrust itself back to the fore, on PlayStation 3 probably, with its best outing yet. **Duncan Harris**

■ *Ace Combat Zero can be imported now.*



BATTLE OF WITS: Once you enter a dogfight, it's the first to lose their nerve that ends up dead.

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Locking on and letting rip can be enjoyable. – Replaying missions countless times isn't.	+ The best in the series, especially during replays. – The ground looks like vomit close-up.	+ The engines roar and the radios buzz with character. – All in all, a sonic boom.

LIFESPAN

Not even the multi-player, unlockable planes and extra challenges will keep you airborne for more than a few days.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
ACE COMBAT 3

IT'S WORSE THAN...
ACE COMBAT 4

It still has the wings to carry it to a better place, but some time out to refuel and to rethink its design is needed. Not bad, however, just not particularly great.

74

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Kuju
Publisher: Codemasters
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 89kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
So, like, what's, y'know, like, the best version of *Sensi*, like, y'know, ever?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"You can enter organised tournaments on the original *Sensible Soccer* in Denmark, Germany, the Czech Republic and Brazil."

GAMEFAX
Sport | Multi-player | Budget | Old-school

TRIVBURST
- The game you loved in the early '90s is back!
- And it's absolutely nowhere near as good!
- Customise all your teams and player data!
- If you can be arsed!

The MON£¥ $HOT
Here's a goalkeeper, making what's clearly an amazing save. There are a lot of these in *Sensible Soccer*. A suspicious amount, in fact.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE?

One of the things that *Sensi* trumpets is that its players all have big, cartoony heads. What it doesn't say is that not many of them at all look particularly like who they're meant to be. So here's a quiz. Can you name the players below? If you can... oh, wait, the answers are on the screens. Best just laugh at the 'likenesses', then...

So this is David Beckham, rocking the Dan D look. We wonder how he broke the news of his cosmetic surgery to Posh.

"THE PAST THE PRESENT

SENSIBLE SOCCER

More disappointing than not even qualifying for the World Cup? Most definitely.

Oh, dear. It was only a month ago that we said *Sensible Soccer* would be "quite fun". And, at first, it is. 'Cos, you know, it's *Sensi* – the best football game of the '90s. But then, after a few matches, the nostalgia blindfold falls off and you realise that, actually, its only *Sensi* in the loosest of senses. All it really has in common with the peak of last decade's gaming is its overhead viewpoint. Aside from that, it's not much like *Sensible Soccer* at all.

You see, *Sensible Soccer* (the Amiga version, that is, not that PSone *thing* that masqueraded as *Sensi*), was joyous – the epitome of 'one more go'-ness, keeping us all glued to our screens, desperate to beat our mates and claim the coveted title of 'Greatest *Sensi* Player Ever Ever Ever'. And the reason it was so glorious? Because it only needed one button to do everything – and that one button did it brilliantly. Here, while passing works well – jabs of ⊗ will almost always see the ball find its target, allowing for a crisp game – and the ball sticks to the players' feet, making for some nice and easy dribbling, the other aspects of control are fudged. Tackling is pretty much redundant. All you need to do to dispossess an opponent is run into him, and he'll immediately surrender possession. Sliding tackles? Well, those are there, yes, but they're a much less effective method of gaining possession. There are two consequences to this – firstly, you can go for games on end without seeing a free-kick, and secondly, it leads to penalty box scrambles that are just *bizarre*. As you sprint into the area, a defender will probably step up and take the ball away. At which point, your support striker will be on hand to reclaim the ball, another defender comes in to get the ball from him and the

JUST THE BASICS: The graphics are far from stellar, but they do the job perfectly well.

"THIS IS ONLY REALLY SENSIBLE SOCCER IN THE LOOSEST OF SENSES"

TOP 5 SENSIBLES

- Captain Sensible.
- Oh, you remember...
- He sang Happy Talk...
- And the Big Break theme.
- Oops, out of room.

GAMEPIE

10% It's *Sensi*
20% Oh, it's not, not really.
70% Weeping girlishly with the sheer disappointment.

ANSWER

Sensible World Of Soccer '95-'96, which corrected the faults of the management side of *SWOS*, making for a days-devouring beast of a game."

MAKE ME A MAN

There are, as you'd expect, team customisation options in *Sensible Soccer*, allowing you to create players with rude words for names, tweak their stats a little and – in theory – mould your own footballing army of appalling looking mutants. Sadly, though, the player appearance editor offers, in the light of the extensive selections offered by the likes of *Smackdown* or *The Godfather*, depressingly few ways to transform your men into freaks. It's all just a little too limited for our liking. Nor can you import them into the team of your choice – you can only play them in a custom-built side. Ho hum.

Here's our blue-haired footballing beast.

FOUL PLAY: The lack of fouls means lectures from the ref are uncommon.

WINNERS' CEREMONY: This screen is all you get when you win the World Cup. Rubbish, yes?

ZOOM WITH A VIEW: you can zoom in close-up with the quite nifty replays menu.

CAN YOU FREE KICK IT? Hey, a free-kick. The lack of need for ... tackles renders this set rate.

second striker falls over, a midfielder arrives... and this goes on, possession switching every two seconds until, eventually, the ball pings away and everyone chases after it. This means the only way to score is via a slick passing move followed by a tap-in, or a long-range blast. Except...

BORE DRAW

Scoring goals can be overly tricky. This isn't just us being crap – some of the keepers, besides, say, the ones at Stoke or Luton, are superhuman. Therefore you can discount howitzers from distance – most of the time – and unless you're square onto the goal, you'll be lucky to get the ball on target anyway – aftertouch, a trademark of *Sensi*, is insanely sensitive, and the slightest twitch of the stick sends the ball miles wide. There are times when you'll rack up a high score, certainly but more by luck than judgement. Your best bet is to just *brush* ⓞ, as anything more than that is certain to see the ball be hammered over the bar. But the biggest problem *Sensi* has is its acute lack of atmosphere. Even on the Amiga, there was raucous, if unintelligible, crowd noise. Here, the fans are so quiet as to be inaudible, and it makes matches feel so lacking in said atmosphere, you may as well be having a kickabout in space.

In *Sensi*'s favour, there are *stacks* of competitions to enter – every team from every major league is here, with all the requisite knockout tournaments, including (of course) the World Cup. You can make your own competitions, and customise all the teams and players, And while it certainly doesn't look amazing, what really could be done to make a top-down football game look sexy? The visuals function perfectly, well, functionally. The menus are clunky, though, especially the team selection one, where you have to v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y keep clicking ➔ to cycle through every side in the list.

As we said, oh dear. The simple fact is that this isn't even fit to lace the boots of those early Amiga versions of *Sensible Soccer*. It's nowhere near as fun as that was, and it genuinely hurts us to say that. By the way, you know those cheapo 'plug and play' joysticks you can buy with games pre-installed on them? One of those has the original *Sensi* on it. Just a thought. **David Cook**

■ Sensible Soccer *is out on June 9th.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Fast. Seems quite fun to begin with. – It's all just boring and without atmosphere.	+ Looks fine. It does all it needs to, and should, do. – No banquet for the retinas, but no matter..	+ Yes, it definitely has some sound. – The crowd are quieter than Man Utd fans.

LIFESPAN

30 minutes of going 'hey, it's *Sensi*'. A couple of hours, max, of underwhelming action. Then it's turn-off time.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
UEFA CHALLENGE

IT'S WORSE THAN...
FIFA WORLD CUP 2006

Well, it *is* only 25 quid. Unfortunately, *Pro Evo 5* is now available on the platinum range. Get that, and save yourself a tenner and the disappointment.

5/8

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Atlus
Publisher: Atlus
Players: 1
Memory Save: 342kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

QUESTION...
What does Shin Megami Tensei actually mean?

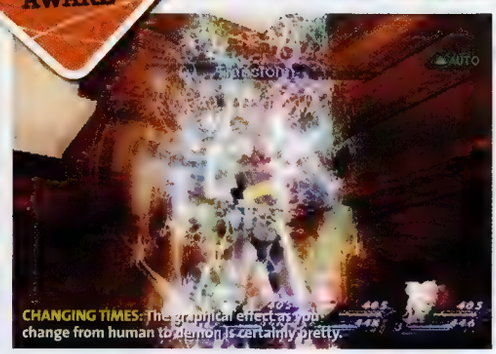
DOT.COM
The official *Digital Devil Saga* website at www.digitaldevilsaga.com is a great resource for the game and the style of presentation is totally in keeping with *Megami Tensai's* look and feel.

GAMEFAX
Action
Sequel
RPG
Jap Curio

TRIVBURST
- Hundreds of spells and attacks to learn.
- Switch between human and demon form to exploit enemies weaknesses.
- Learn combo skills to defeat enemies.

The MON£Y $HOT
Here's your team of three about to take on an enemy tribe. The battling is much simpler than in previous Megami Tensai games, but every bit as satisfying.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD



CHANGING TIMES: The graphical effect as you change from human to demon is certainly pretty.

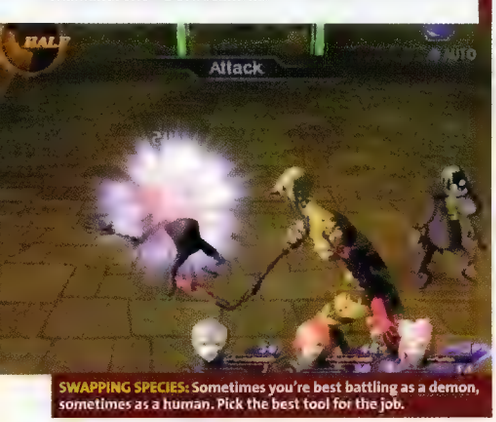
"WE'LL STICK TO DIGITAL TELEVISION, WE RECKON"

SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA

Better the devil you know than the devil you don't? You're best off avoiding them entirely in this bizarre RPG.

THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE

You don't have to play through all the battles in your devil form, you know. There are occasions when your human form is better suited to take on a particular enemy. Lucky, then, that you can transform from one to the other during battle. While the demons rely mainly on elemental spells, the humans use some big honkin' guns. Mankind: one – Devil scum: nil.



SWAPPING SPECIES: Sometimes you're best battling as a demon, sometimes as a human. Pick the best tool for the job.

If you want obscure, sprawling stories that are difficult to comprehend and go on forever, you can either start watching Lost for the first time mid-second season, or play the *MegaTen* series. The *Megami Tensei* set is massive in Japan but has seldom made its presence felt outside of the East, mainly due to its controversial religious mythological plots, complex battle systems and difficulty level. After the critical success last year of *Shin Megami Tensei: Lucifer's Call*, however, it seems the west are now among the privileged.

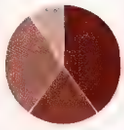
The first thing to be said about *Digital Devil Saga* is that this is no typical RPG. There are no medieval towns, no princesses in towers, no crazy stuffed toy style characters and you most definitely will not save the world. It's already been destroyed you see? This is a post-apocalyptic nightmare of a world known as the Junkyard, where our 'hero' Serph and the other members of the Embryon Clan that he commands fight five other tribes. The winners will supposedly be transported to Nirvana. It all goes pear-shaped when, in the middle of a tribe battle, a weird alien organism is struck by a blinding light from the sky, causing every person on planet to develop the ability to change into a demon and eat each other. We hate it when that happens. The story may be sprawling and weird but it's certainly compelling enough to make you want to buy the forthcoming *Digital Devil Saga 2* to see how it all turns out.

"DEVIL SAGA BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN INTENSE JAPANESE RPGS AND MORE MAINSTREAM AFFAIRS"

TOP 5 DEVILS

- Tasmanian Devil
- Devil May Cry
- Devil woman
- Devil sandwich toaster
- Gary and Phil Devil

GAMEPIE



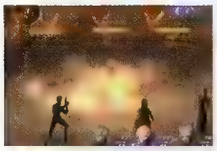
40% Random battles.
20% Envying characters' hair.
30% Devouring enemies.
10% Laughing at the dialogue.

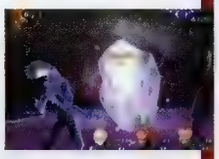
ANSWER

It translates as True Goddess Rebirth. All *MegaTen* games deal with religion, including themes of reincarnation.

TOTALLY WEAK, DUDE.

You really can't breeze through the battles in *Digital Devil Saga*. It's going to take a bit of strategic thinking to defeat these enemies. The most effective way to win is working out their weakness and then using spells that exploit it. Not only will it cause masses of damage, but it will utilise the 'press turn system', giving you more turns before the enemy gets to try out the same strategy on you and your team.

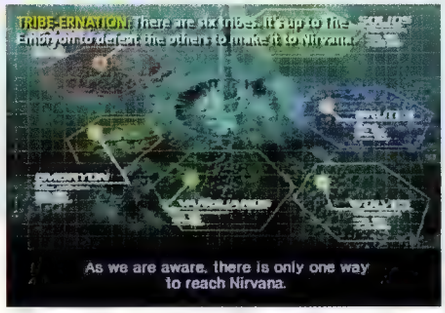




MEGAMI HEN-SEI: He's found your 'afraid of poultry' weakness. We'd call you a chicken but that's just a low blow.

THRUST-A-MOVE: We'd avoid this beast's Hell Thrust at all costs, if we were you. Ooh, it smarts.

GIVE ME A WING: The enemies are certainly on the unusual side in *Digital Devil Saga*.



TRIBE-ERNATION: There are six tribes. It's up to the Embryon to defeat the others to make it to Nirvana.

TONI AND GUYS: Mmm, they really do have spectacular hair in *Digital Devil Saga*.

THE WEAK THAT WAS

From the very start you'll find battles surprisingly easy to navigate. The enemies are interesting and smart, changing tactics, calling in reinforcements and healing each other as they go. They'll also attack your weaknesses – using a fire spell on a character with low resistance to flames and so forth. Of course, quick changes of tactics will work wonders for your side as well. Not only will it cause great damage, but using said smart tactics will earn you extra goes in the turn-based battles. This system was used to great effect in *Lucifer's Call* and is no less useful here. In fact if you don't think through your moves properly, you'll find yourself in real trouble. However, the battling is mercifully easier than in *Lucifer's Call* and recruiting and building a team enemy demons for your own side, a long held *MegaTen* concept, is now completely missing.

It's been replaced with a *Final Fantasy X* grid sphere-type character building system which is simple to use, but unbelievably customisable. You'd think the loss of the demon recruitment would let down the game, but in fact it always seemed a bit unfair the way *MegaTen* games tended to drop you in it and leave you with infinite options but no guidelines whatsoever. It may work well in Japan, but in Europe a more structured battling and character system tends to curry rather more favour. *Digital Devil Saga* does a good job of bridging the gap between Japan's more intense RPGs and the more mainstream games that have gone down well in Europe.

The look of the game is particularly striking. There's none of your bright cartoonish cuteness going on here. Instead you'll find some massively sophisticated vistas, characters, environments and enemies all brought to pastel-shaded anime life by the great Japanese artist Kazuma Kaneko. The decidedly creepy yet beautiful visuals really make *Digital Devil Saga* stand out from the crowd and the look of the characters and cut-scenes even surpasses *Lucifer's Call*.

Ultimately, however, although the pared-down battle system is actually an improvement on last year's *DigiTen* outing, it's got little to mark it out from the other great RPGs on the shelves at the moment, despite a very individual look and story. A few months ago, *Digital Devil Saga* would have been a godsend but in comparison to the likes of *Dragon Quest*, *Rogue Galaxy* or *Kingdom Hearts 2*, it's not quite the big reward for waiting all these years for *MegaTen* games that it should have been. **Kirsten Kearney**

■ **Digital Devil Saga *is on June 30th.***

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Very good, easy to use battle system. – But the number of random battles is high.	+ Mature and stylish look. Very nice. – It's a bit on the depressing side, though.	+ Strange, creepy background music. – Tunes can be repetitive in certain areas.

LIFESPAN

There's 40 hours here and this is only the first half of the game. You'll have to get part two to see how the story ends.

MINUTES ... CAKE

IT'S BETTER THAN...
MAGNA CARTA

IT'S WORSE THAN...
DRAGON QUEST

An extremely well realised RPG retaining all the bizarreness of its Japanese roots without the indecipherable combat and customisation you might expect.

72

OSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: KCET
Publisher: Konami
Players: 1-8
Memory Save: [illegible] KB
Surround Sound: Yes
50-60Hz: Yes
Widescreen: No

QUESTION...
Before we all lay arse accustomed to the fitness arrows, what were the player's health bars represented by?

GAMEFAX
Sports
Sequel
Multiplay
Realistic

WINNING

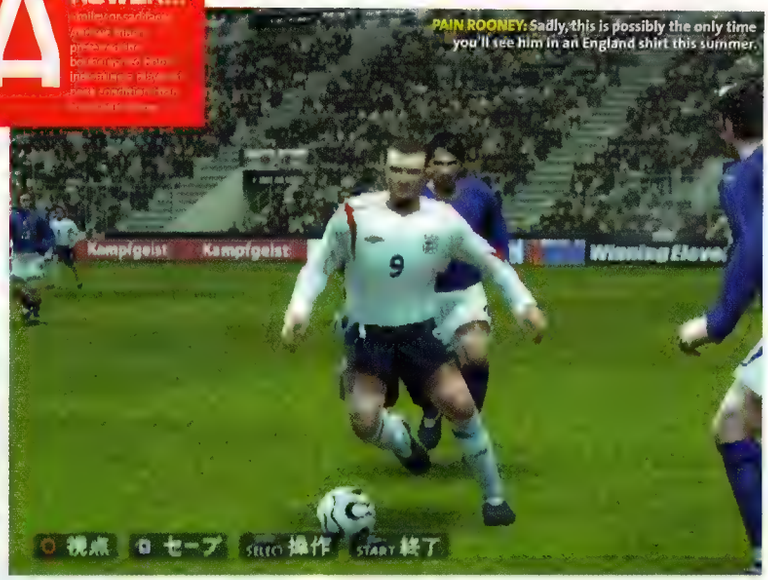
SIMPLY THE BECKS: Beckham in game, as you can see, looks remarkably like Beckham in real life.

THE KITS ARE ALRIGHT: There are even more kit modding options than ever before.

Photos: Empics

The MON£¥ $HOT

Ronnie here is about to chip the keeper with the tweaked lobbed shot, which can dink the ball over their flailing arms. Back of the net.



ELEVEN 10

PSM2 GOLD AWARD

Get *Winning Eleven* in for the World Cup. After all, it might be your only chance of seeing Rooney in an England shirt for a while.

Owning a copy of *Winning Eleven* is a bit like the secret handshake in the Masons. If you chat to someone about footie games, the chances are that you've both played *Pro Evo* – but the bigger man, the one who proves he's hardcore and 'in the know' is the one that owns the 'modified' PS2 hardware to play Japanese games and uses it to play the latest *Winning Eleven*. These fans import Konami's Japanese episodes in the long months before the next *PES* arrives. And like us, it's these people that notice the finer details within minutes of kicking off, be it 'oh, look the players eyes move during replays' or 'wow, that lobbed through ball feels much better than last time'. They'll even be able to flick through confusing Japanese text menus in the blink of an eye. This is the next *PES*... now! But although there are bags of new features and tweaks to sing about, the latest instalment feels a bit like the round-up part of Match Of The Day 2 – you've seen most of it before.

Now don't get us wrong, *Winning Eleven 10* is a damn fine footie game, but compared to the way the gameplay has evolved over previous episodes, this doesn't have the same steep learning curve. You don't get the same satisfaction, for example, as you did perfecting a halfway line lob in *Winning Eleven 8* – instead *WE10* enhances the skills you've already learned by booting out flaws from past seasons. How so? Well, Konami have dulled the trajectory of chip shots, which makes it easier to dink the ball over stranded keepers (hooray!) and they've honed the dribbling to allow tricky players like Ronaldinho and Henry to hotstep through defences – which you'll agree is long overdue. They've even tweaked the passing system to allow you much more varied passage to goal. So now, Gerrard can fire laser-guided long balls around the pitch without that helium balloon loftiness of old, and defence-splitting through passes are as cutting as robot surgeon. Even the compulsory new tricks – although they work fine – feel as though we've used them before. Take the

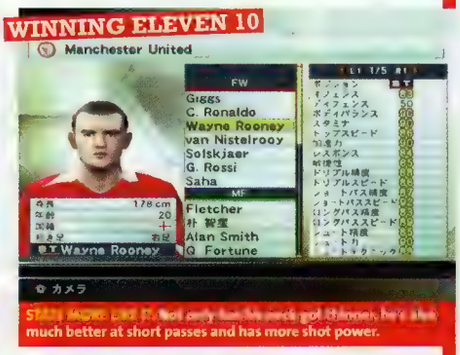
ROCKET ROBBIE: Little Carlos built up his leg strength by lugging heavy machinery around as a kid. True story.
FIRE
視点
セーブ
SELECT 操作
START 終了

"DEFENCE-SPLITTING THROUGH PASSES ARE NOW AS CUTTING AS A ROBOT SURGEON"

PLAYER PROFILES

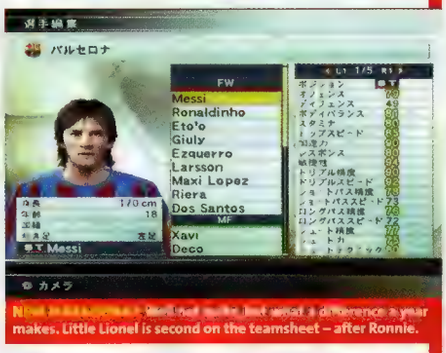
Quinton Fortune aside, *Winning Eleven* is usually spot on with individual stats. But like us, you've probably felt that certain players could've been a little better – like Rooney for example. After all, these are the stars of the moment. Thankfully, *WE10* has addressed this faux-pas, and here's a selection of player attributes to prove we're not lying.

LA Galaxy's David Beckham, so he's not exactly lacking in skills here, but every football fan knows he's better than the stats suggest.



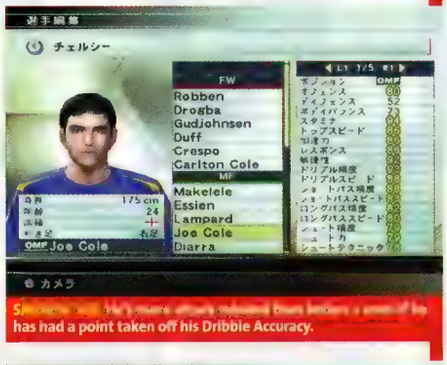
Stats-wise Wayne Rooney is not quite the wreck of chimpoo he's often made out to be, but he's also much better at short passes and has more shot power.

Although Barcelona may have loved Leo while playing Manchester League, but standard Messi was a bag of spanners.



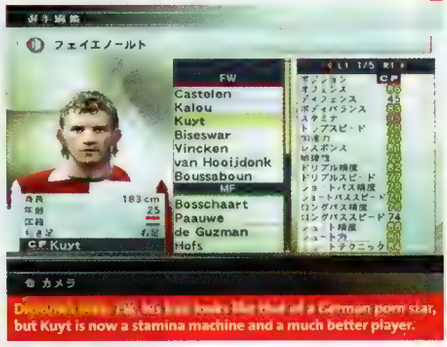
Not much has changed in Messi's world over the course of a year, but little makes. Little Lionel is second on the teamsheet – after Ronnie.

Chelsea's Joe Cole may have looked like the stats he had last year. We always preferred to play Wright-Phillips instead.



Stamina-wise, Joe's more efficient than before, however a point has had a point taken off his Dribble Accuracy.

Phillip Cocu's The young guns in the Netherlands aren't worth a second glance before. We do like his crew cut, mind.



Dwaylon Jones – OK, his hair looks like that of a German porn star, but Kuyt is now a stamina machine and a much better player.

Matthew's Feint – if you remove the sleight of foot, it's essentially the shoulder drop of old with some fancy legwork added on. It looks nice, but it's not really adding anything except style. Then there's the 'new' drag-back (inspired by the world's ugliest footballer, Ronaldinho), it's actually just a normal drag-back, but with more flair in the execution. OK, we're nit-picking, but maybe concentrating on the fumbling keepers – who often struggle with shots that come straight at them – may have been time better spent?

Grumbles and cosmetic enhancements aside (oh, did we mention some of the most scarily realistic player models we've ever seen?) *WE10* has all the thrills of real football – but you knew that already. But at first it does feel tricky. The number of times we've hit the post and bar is frustratingly high (a record eight times in one match, would you believe?) but this *can* happen in football so we'll let that slide. Soon you'll be powering home headers (complete with new leaping animations), curling pinpoint accurate drives into the top corner and unleashing staggering volleys as the ball drops over your player's shoulder. And now it doesn't seem so likely to always try a daft header from 30 yards out when you're gearing up for a rocket shot and you'll be gasping in awe as your little fellas shape up for dazzling scissor kicks from audacious angles. Whether it goes in is another question entirely, mind.

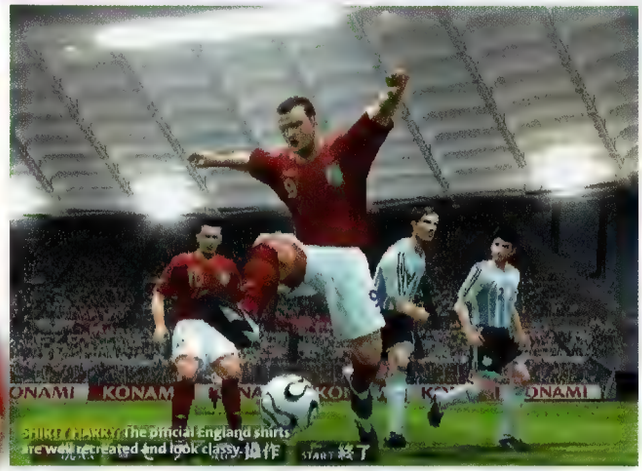
ON THE SPIN: Man Yoo's finest demonstrates his fancy footwork as he pirouettes past the defence.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES: This season's goalies have a problem catching the ball comfortably.

PASSING TIME

The aforementioned passing game requires even more precise judgement and positioning than earlier games. Try to play a pass while off-balance and your intended recipient will have to back-pedal to get anywhere near it – desperately lunging for the ball and heightening their risk of being hospitalised by a tough tackle. And while we're on the subject, you'll need to be precise with tackles as one slip could leave you as stranded as the cast of Lost. But once you master the passing game – which won't take long – you'll be stroking it around like Arsenal at their most fluid. It really is

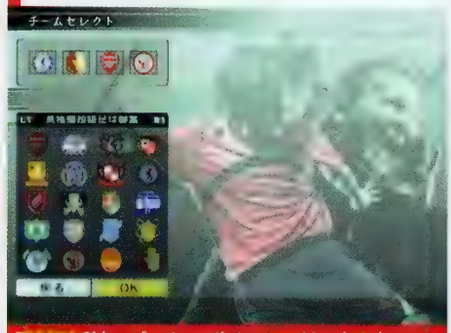
IF IT MAKES YOU FLAPPY: Ronaldinho's flip-flap trick works a treat in *Winning Eleven 10*.



SHIRT CLARKY: The official England shirts are well recreated and look classy.

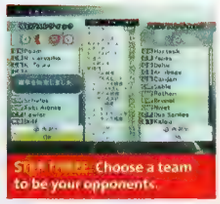
RANDOM MODE

God only knows why this feature has taken so long, but finally we've got an option to randomly cobble together a team of superstars. The way it works is simple. You select four teams like Man Yoo, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool (ChelPoolArse United, anyone?), hit ⓞ, and the computer will randomly select a squad by cropping out players from each. Then you can take to the field and try out your new team in a one-off exhibition match and hope they tear the opposition apart.



STEP ONE: Pick any four teams that you want to select players from and hit ⓞ. You can even select a single league to use.

STEP TWO: You can edit the selection if you're not happy.



STEP THREE: Choose a team to be your opponents.

STEP FOUR: Then you can head out on to the pitch and pit the two teams against each other in a special exhibition match.

that good, although pinball-esque scrimmages are commonplace in congested areas, thanks to the ball physics being more lifelike than ever.

Elsewhere, you can now recreate this summer's World Cup thanks to the inclusion of Togo, Ghana, Angola and Trinidad & Tobago. You can create a team of random all-stars (see Random Mode) and you can even choose from 15 (yes, 15) colours to use as background to player names in the HUD. Pointless, yes, but still technically 'new'.

Advantage decisions are no longer signalled by a yellow symbol appearing on screen, allowing for a greater sense of anxiety over what the referee might decide – although one, clearly not offside ruling had us swearing like an incensed manager. Yes, there are still plenty of dubious offside decisions. 'Controversially', kits no longer get progressively muddier during matches (to save on washing powder, perhaps?) and it looks like the gate receipts jar is brimming again as the stadiums are packed out during games (albeit with a bland selection of faceless 2D fans), unlike before. The Nippon challenge of old (where you follow Japan's road to the World Cup) is still in place, so we've got our fingers crossed for an English take on it in *Pro Evolution Soccer 6*.

Yes, despite the odd touch of slowdown, *WE10* still offers the ultimate footie experience – so join the exclusive club of *Winning Eleven* importers and get this in to wile away the hours between games during the World Cup. It's the best football game on PS2. Again. **Nathan Irvine**

■ *Got a Jap PS2? Then* WE10 *is out in Japan now.*

"WINNING ELEVEN 10 STILL OFFERS THE ULTIMATE FOOTIE EXPERIENCE"

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ The closest thing to football in game form. – The quick free kick feature is pointless.	+ Mostly excellent player likenesses. – John Terry looks odd and there's still slowdown.	+ The commentary is excitable... – ...even if we don't understand a word of it.

LIFESPAN

There are new tournaments, including a recreation of the World Cup, and you never feel you've played the same game twice.

MINUTES ... YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
PRO EVO 5

IT'S WORSE THAN...
WINNING THE WORLD CUP

There doesn't seem to be as much to learn this time and feels more like a simple update than usual. Still, *WE10* is the best footie game around, no contest.

90

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sony
Publiser: Sony
Players: 1
Memory Save: 234kb
Surround Sound: No
50-60Hz: No
Widescreen: Yes

QUESTION...
Siren shares so much in common with the *Silent Hill* series. Are they linked in any way?

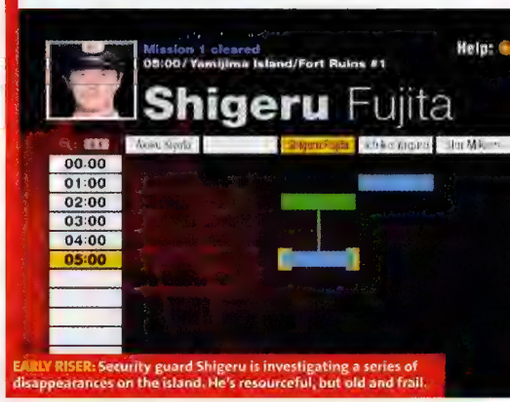
GAMEFAX
Action
Horror
Hard
Sequel

The MON£¥ $HOT
The distorted yelling from the Shibito as they chase after you is awful. If they catch you they gnaw at your flesh, so stay the Hell away...

PSM2 SILVER AWARD

TIMELINE OF YOUR LIFE

Between each mission, you're presented with the link menu. Here you swap between characters and their version of the events timeline. So while one character is in the amusement park at 3am, another could be in the village. Because of this, events affect each character in different ways and sometimes they cross paths, helping each other through the chaos. Brilliantly novel.



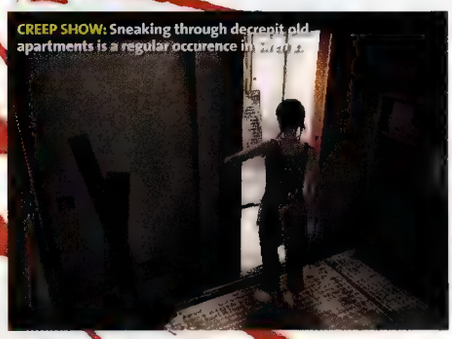
EARLY RISER: Security guard Shigeru is investigating a series of disappearances on the island. He's resourceful, but old and frail.

"LISTEN TO THIS SIREN'S CALL"

FORBIDDEN SIREN 2

The gaming equivalent of walking through a dodgy council estate, on your own, covered in money.

The original *Siren* was flush with creativity but deeply, depressingly flawed. Its sequel, however, repairs the niggles that ruined its predecessor and, amazingly, steals *Silent Hill*'s crown as the darkest, creepiest survival horror on PS2. In the first game, the rural Japanese village of Hanuda was infected by an evil taint that resurrected the dead, turning them into slobbering, flesh-obsessed monsters. In *Siren 2*, Datatsushi, the alien responsible for the virus, is back and spreading his foulness across the secluded holiday island of Yamijima. Holiday resort gets infected by evil and monsters? Dark and light world? Sirens going off? Very *Hill*, but it's an altogether different game.


CREEP SHOW: Sneaking through decrepit old apartments is a regular occurence in *Siren 2*.

As before, you take control of a large group of characters rather than one single 'hero'. These range from a soldier and a journalist to a fortune teller. Each has their own strengths and weaknesses, so while the soldiers can handle rifles, the ageing security guard only has his standard issue pistol. There are also physical differences. The aforementioned security guard runs out of breath easily and stumbles when jumping from a height, while Ichiko, a 14 year-old schoolgirl, is nimble on her feet and can outrun situations where larger, slower character would struggle.

The subtle animation makes each person feel strangely *real*. This is helped by the amazing facial textures that've been captured directly from video, making them look scarily realistic. And the enemies are similarly eerie. There are two kinds – the Shibito and the Yambato. The Shibito are the living dead – zombies, but with faint glimmers of their past humanity. If you watch them from afar, sometimes they'll try to go back to their old routines; farmers start ploughing the land for example. It's a nice touch. You can kill the Shibito, but they come back to 'life' after a few minutes.

SMOG OFF

The Yambato, on the other hand, are clouds of black smog. The only way to disperse them is to blast them with light. Flashlights, car headlamps – anything will do. But if you get caught, ready

FOUR THINGS SIREN 2 DOES BETTER THAN SILENT HILL

IT ALL LOOKS INFINITELY MORE REALISTIC

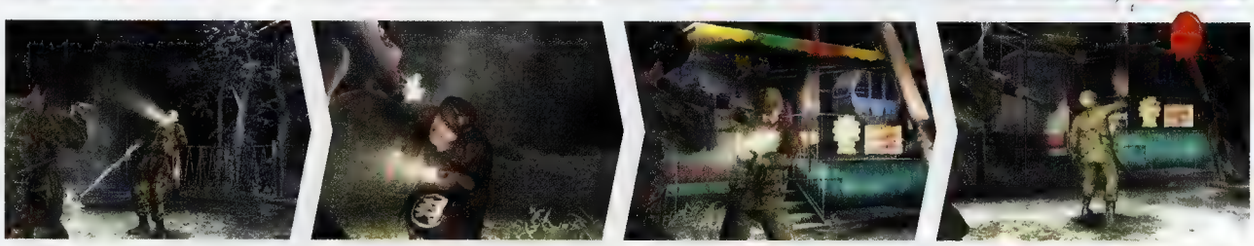
Just *look* at the detail on those faces. Every character in *Siren 2* is based on a real actor, from their voice to their facial expressions and the way they move. This adds to the horror element, especially when you see Ichiko (far left) being mercilessly torn apart by baddies.

YOU CAN ENTER THE BRAIN OF A ZOMBIE

Use your sight jack ability to see through the eyes of enemies and other characters. Only certain characters have this power and it comes into use when you're trying to sneak through an area undetected. When the enemy turns away, slip past quietly.

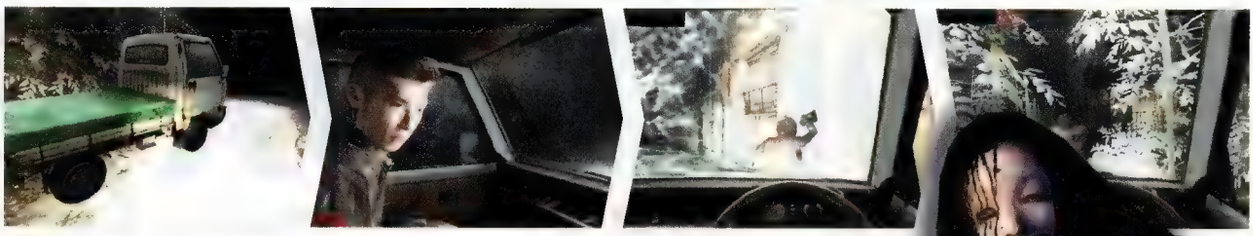
THE MONSTERS USED TO BE HUMAN BEINGS

In one scene, a soldier's squad-mate is brutally murdered. As he cries for the loss of his friend, the corpse shivers back to life and starts firing at what used to be his buddy. You have to take him down under orders from your sergeant. An incredibly powerful moment.



YOU CAN USE A CAR TO MOW DOWN ENEMIES

The driving sections are fantastic. The handling is realistic and you can look around inside with the analogue stick. You can run down zombies (with a satisfying clunk) and use it to reach high places. The headlamps come in useful when the smoggy Yambato show up.



yourself for a grisly death. When you slay a Shibito, the Yambato float over and attempt to resurrect them, so flash your torch. *Siren 2*'s more combat-orientated than the last one but the horror element is as strong. It's a nice halfway between shooter and shrieker. Whatever that means.

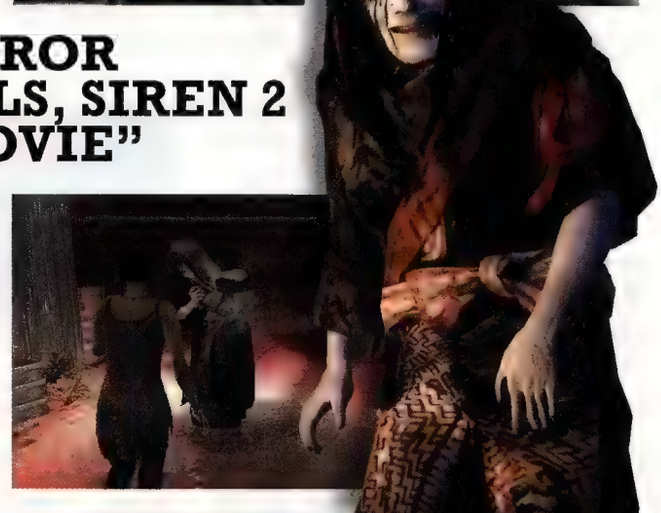
The game's big gimmick, the so-called 'sight jacking' ability, also makes a return. Holding R2 and twiddling the stick allows you to 'tune in' to enemies' brains. You see through their eyes, which helps with the game's numerous stealth sections, not to mention finding secrets out of your view. In one clever set-piece, you play a man with poor vision who sight jacks into his dog to help him navigate. What follows is one of the most tense sneaking sections in any game ever as you creep through a fishing village avoiding Shibito zombies.

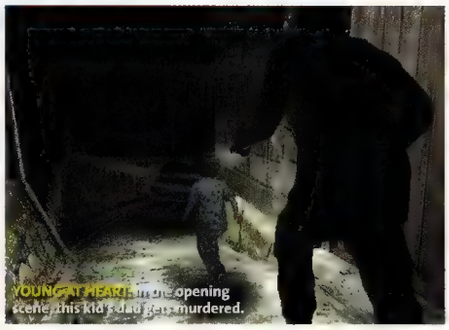
Problems? It suffers from slightly awkward controls and some oblique mission objectives that see you running around for hours trying to find a stupidly well-hidden object. But don't let this put you off. *Siren 2* is an experience unlike any other and, with its unique J-horror-inspired visuals and storyline, feels like a really well-produced movie at times. But while it is creepier than *Silent Hill* that's only as far as ambience and atmosphere goes. There are no real scares as such and it isn't as well-designed or as stylish as Konami's horror opus.

So give *Siren 2* a go. If you're put off by the last game, don't be – everything's been improved. If you're after immediate thrills and *Resi 4*-style action, though, forget it. This is a game that relies on subtle chills – not things popping out from behind bushes and going "rarrrgh!". **Andy Kelly**

■ Siren 2 *is out on import now.*

"WITH ITS J-HORROR INSPIRED VISUALS, SIREN 2 FEELS LIKE A MOVIE"





YOUNGEST HEART: In the opening scene, this kid's dad gets murdered.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Novel and varied throughout. – It can be a little clunky at times.	+ Gorgeously subdued and photorealistic. – It's all a bit grim and dark, really.	+ Suitably eerie. A Japanese voice option. – There's hardly any music in the game.

LIFESPAN

Multiple paths through mean that you could play it all again, but your first run-through will take around 20 hours.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
FATAL FRAME 3

IT'S WORSE THAN...
SILENT HILL 2

One of the creepiest games on PS2. The only things holding *Siren 2* back from greatness are clunky controls and some iffy mission objectives.

81

INFOSTRIP

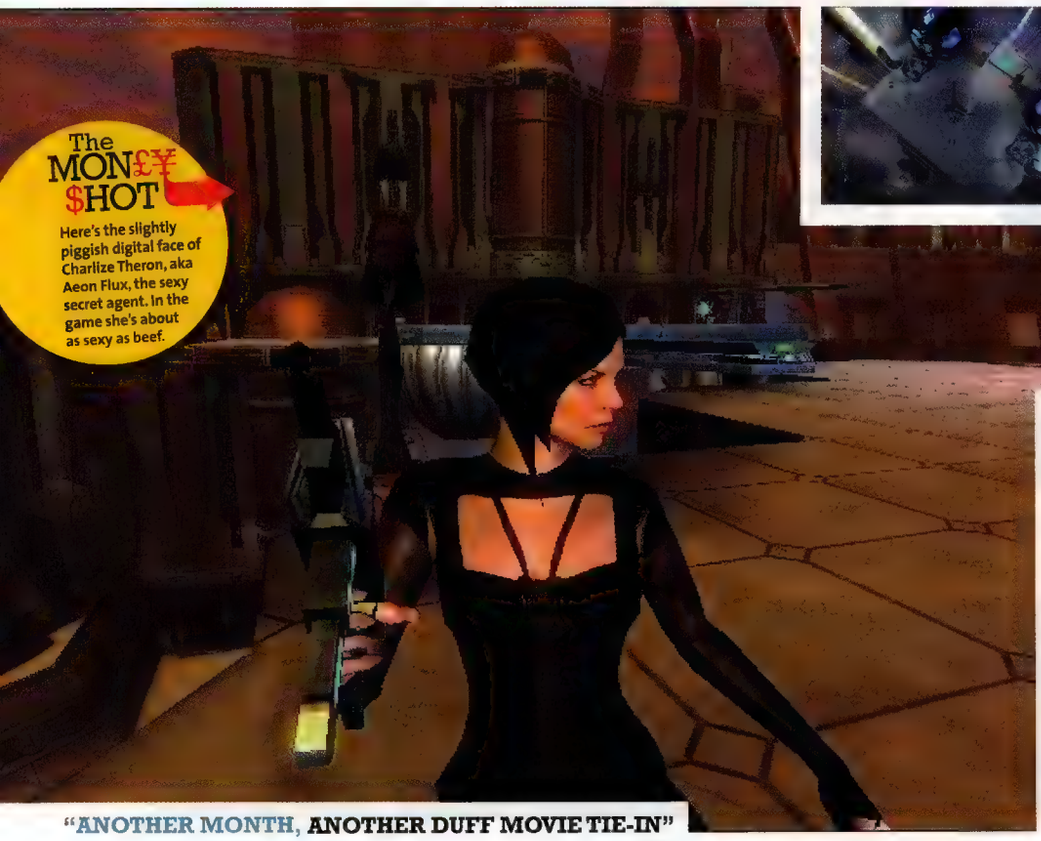
DETAILS
Developer: Terminal Reality
Publisher: THQ
Players: 1
Memory Save: 433kb
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer
"Michelle Rodriguez was originally cast as Aeon Flux, but Charlize Theron took over at the last minute. Good, 'cos Mich is rubbish."

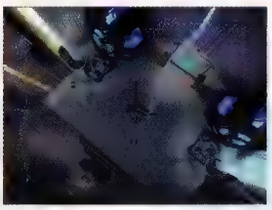
GAMEPIE
40% Leaping
30% Kicking
20% Falling
10% Weeping

GAMEFAX
Action
Official License
Platformer
Shit

TRIVBURST
- Features the likeness of Charlize Theron.
- Mixes the stories of both the film and the cartoon.
- Slow down time Matrix-style. Gosh.



The MON£Y $HOT
Here's the slightly piggish digital face of Charlize Theron, aka Aeon Flux, the sexy secret agent. In the game she's about as sexy as beef.



BORE TO THE FUTURE: This kind of dismal sci-fi pap wasn't even tolerable on PSone, you know.

ABSEIL AWAY: Ironically, jumping through hoops sums up the game perfectly. It's linear like motorways.

"ANOTHER MONTH, **ANOTHER DUFF MOVIE TIE-IN**"

AEON FLUX

Time for a thoroughly obvious joke – this is a tired movie spin-off that really *flux* us off.

Everything about this game is *shoddy*. The graphics are poor, the animation is stunted and amateurish, the level design is unimaginative, the combat system is poorly-executed and the frame rate is sloppier than a toddler eating a jam sandwich. Hell, even the loading screens are low-res and cruddy. It's one of the laziest film licenses we've ever played and, remarkably, even worse than the truly pathetic *Batman Begins*.

Controlling Ms Flux is like trying to guide a feather across a windy field. The direction she leaps always seems to be in contrast to where you're pointing the analogue stick and the collision detection is, quite literally, hit and miss. There are a load of context sensitive 'grapple points' that let you swing around on her glowing 'space rope' thing, and you can run along walls *Prince Of Persia*-style, but none of this requires any skill whatsoever. Quite simply, it fails as a platformer. The levels themselves leave no room for creative play or deviation from their fixed, boring routes. It demands nothing from your brain and you find yourself blindly following a set path of pipes and tunnels without even having to think about it.

COMBAT DEVOLVED

And the failures don't end there. The combat is just as creaky as the exploration. Tapping ⊡ and △ is about the size of it, although there are scripted kill moves that can be performed when an enemy's health bar is in the red by holding R1 and a button of your choice. They're rubbish, though, and you can achieve much the same results by just kicking them again. It's the kind of basic scrapping you've seen in a million similar games from *BloodRayne* to *The Fantastic Four*. Arse.

To put things into perspective, we had more fun searching the Internet for people called 'Ian Flux' as part of an intro joke that didn't quite make it into the mag, due to it being rubbish. Did you know that there's a famous GT driver called Ian Flux? You do now. If you like your games broken, rubbish and pointless, you'll enjoy *Aeon Flux*. If you prefer games that are actually good, look elsewhere. Think we're being too negative? Well, when you're playing something with so little merit, it's hard to be positive. Almost impossible, actually. It works on a very basic level, we suppose, and it may entertain small, stupid children, but for us it's an inexcusable mess. **Andy Kelly**

■ Aeon Flux *is festering in shops right now*

POLE POSITION: There are pole dancing sections (not really).

SUPER WONKY BALLS

In an idea lifted from GameCube shooter *Metroid Prime*, Aeon can seal herself inside a giant robotic ball and roll around the level bashing into people. In one hilariously cack-handed set-piece she smashes through a window into a group of enemies and grinds to a halt in front of them. Somehow a calculation has been messed up and instead of hurtling through them dramatically she bangs against their knees softly and rolls backwards. This is all still better than the actual game. Oh, dear.

A LOAD OF BALLS: Squeezing inside a ball and rolling around must be a lot of fun. Aeon certainly seems to enjoy it anyway.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ It can be sort of fun. If you're an idiot. – Basically broken and horrible to play.	+ Aeon looks a *bit* like Charlize Theron. – Reminds us of a crap PSone game.	+ Charlize Theron's sexy voice. Mmm... – The rest sounds like robot trumps.

LIFESPAN
You know the score. No, not the actual score but the score with these kinds of games; ten hours or so, if you can be arsed.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
HE-MAN

IT'S WORSE THAN...
TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

Aeon Flux is everything you'd expect from an action movie license – brainless, flashy and without substance. Which would be OK if it wasn't so utterly rubbish too.

3/10

GRAFT IS GOOD.

Product Release 5th May 2006

The new **Magic: The Gathering®** *Dissension*™ set introduces the final three Guilds, new mechanics such as Graft, and further delves into the city-world theme introduced in the *Ravnica*™ and *Guildpact*™ sets.

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INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Clover
Publisher: Capcom
Players: 1
Memory Save: 232kb
Surround Sound: No
50-60Hz: No
Widescreen: No

QUESTION...
Is *Okami* based on real Japanese folklore?

GAMEFAX
Action
Big Choice
Easy
Funny

OKAMI

Stellar visuals, as expected, but stellar gameplay too. Salute the wolf.

You can't run through a level in *Okami* for more than a second without stopping and staring boggle-eyed at something beautiful. But you already knew that, right? You've seen the screenshots and you've heard us prattle on (and on) about the gorgeous cel-shading a hundred times before, so we'll get down to business from the off and tell you how it plays. Well, after we tell you about how *amazing* it looks when Amaterasu, the main character, restores nature with the Celestial Brush.

Holding L1 and pausing with ⊗ lets you draw objects, which then appear instantly in the game world. Draw a circle in the sky and a glowing sun will appear, sketch a wind and a gust of wind will breeze through the level and, if you can't get across a wide gap, ink a bridge and scamper across. But the best effect lets you restore nature. Draw a circle around a dying tree and it'll burst into a puff of cherry blossom petals and bloom with life. Draw a squiggle on the ground and a line of flowers will appear, or draw a dot to plant a tree. Bigger events (like restoring a large, dead tree) make the *whole area* erupt with flowers, plants, streams, sunlight and animal life. It's wonderful.

PSM2 GOLD AWARD

"WE SPENT TEN MINUTES HEADBUTTING MONKEYS INTO A LAKE FOR EXAMPLE"

Frolicking around a level you've just restored is a joy. In fact, it's almost like being a real canine. You can dig holes, bark at people, chase animals, pick up bunny rabbits in your mouth and generally cause mischief. We spent ten minutes headbutting monkeys into a lake, for example. You can cover people in ink with the paintbrush too, but wolves don't really do that. And to give an indication of the level of detail in the game, every single animal and person has an individual animation for shaking off the ink. No, we haven't gone mad – you'll start to notice little things like that while you play *Okami*, as you'll be so absorbed in the world. Like *Shadow Of The Colossus* it's sort of ambient gaming: you'll enjoy running around environments and experimenting with the paintbrush

ANOTHER LEVEL

Whenever you defeat a group of enemies a screen flashes up that awards you points according to how well you fought and how quickly you cleared the arena. These points can then be used to boost your powers, as well as earn you money to buy new items and moves. It's very similar to *Onimusha* in that you hold the button down, filling up one meter (the chosen skill) and draining the other (your experience points). It's not as in-depth a feature as in that game, but you do feel Amaterasu getting stronger as you play.

POWER UP: Boost your stats in exchange for experience points.

PAINT SEEN NOTHING YET: There are loads of brush abilities. This low-level one lets you call upon the powers of the sun by drawing a circle in the sky.

TRIVBURST

- Unlock dozens of special paintbrush powers
- Blend combat, exploration and RPG elements
- Earn experience points and update your stats

DOT.NET

Head over to www.cloverstudio.co.jp/title/okami for desktop wallpapers, pretty pictures and all kinds of lovely *Okami*-related goodness. It's all in Japanese though, so, er, good luck navigating the thing.

GAMEPIE

40% Animals
30% Flowers
20% Plants
10% Sunshine

TOP FIVE WOLVES

- Wolf from Gladiators
- Teen Wolf
- Dances With Wolves
- Wolverhampton
- Wolf Harris

ANSWER...

Yes it is. According to the Shinto religion, Amaterasu, as in the game, is a sun goddess who restores sunlight to the world.

The MON£¥ $HOT
The way fallen enemies explode into flowers and plants, their evil replaced by natural beauty, makes us smile every time. It's just lovely.

TIME OF DAY

There's a real-time day/night cycle in *Okami*. When darkness falls, a cut-scene plays showing the world being dipped in darkness. Black ink smears across the sky, blocking out the sun, and it's stunning to look at. During nightfall, animals sleep soundly and more enemies roam the fields. It also effects some events – there's a shop that only opens at night for example. Later in the game you have the ability to change the time of day by drawing either a sun or a moon in the sky. Drawing a sun is one of the early abilities and you can do it at any time to stave off the blackness. These powers also come into play during some of the game's puzzles – the sun is used to make a tree grow, for example. Very clever.

FUN IN THE SUN: The way the sun's rays spin around the centre is one of our favourite graphical effects in any game ever. Lovely.

WIN, LOSE OR DRAW: The draw distance is insane. Just *look* at the detail in the background...

GROUND FORCE: This is what happens when you restore a dead tree. Look at the pretty flowers.

as much as the game itself which, incidentally, is just as brilliantly accomplished as the graphics.

Oops. In trying to tell you about the gameplay we've been banging on about the graphics. But when we think about it, the graphics are part of the game. The graphics *are* the game. Or something. Look, we don't really know where we're going with this, but such is *Okami*'s bewitching charm. It's so absolutely stunning it could turn even the most eloquent, wordy of people into fat-tongued, incoherent madmen. Much like the characters in the game, in fact. We've been playing it in Japanese, but we have seen some sections translated and it's *mental*. The snappy, funny dialogue and absurd plot give it a skewed sense of humour that suits the relaxed gameplay perfectly.

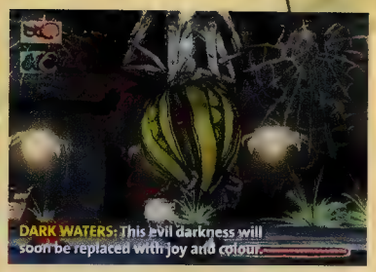
Sitting nicely alongside the lush visuals is the soundtrack, which is probably one of the finest on PS2. As you'd expect, it's mainly Japanese folk music, going from calm ambience while you explore to pounding taiko drum beats during battles. Our one woe is that there's no voice acting. The characters speak in gibberish similar to that of *The Sims*, with only the subtitles making any sense. It's fine to begin with, but the bizarre wittering starts to grate a little. Amaterasu's barking, whimpering and squealing are perfect though. Y'see, being a wolf, she can't really say much, but luckily she has a little green fairy thing who buzzes around her doing all the talking.

VILLAGE PEOPLE

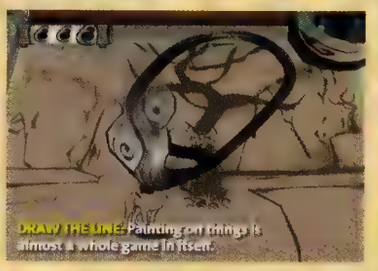
Progression is fairly traditional. Go through a level, solve a puzzle or two, defeat a boss and unlock a new ability. It never slips into routine, though, because it looks so delicious. There are villages dotted around the countryside filled with likeable townsfolk, all of whom Amaterasu must cheer up by helping them with their everyday woes. The sake maker for example. Her waterwheel is broken and business is at a standstill. But, with a flick of the Celestial Brush, you draw in the missing part and the wheel springs into life. So all you're basically doing in *Okami* is restoring nature and helping people. Could there be a nobler pursuit? It's so simple and honest that now whenever we play an urban crime-'em-up, we'll be trying to help people instead of mowing them down in an urban drive-by. Why can't *all* games be this nice?

"YOU'RE RESTORING NATURE AND HELPING PEOPLE. WHY AREN'T ALL GAMES THIS NICE?"

But when she's under threat, Amaterasu puts her niceness aside and gets her paws dirty in combat. When a battle starts, you're surrounded by swirling kanji lettering and 'locked' in a small arena with the enemy. The monsters you face are, from what we can gather, strange evil musicians. There are big burly drummers who send you tumbling back with pulsing shockwaves and nimble guitar-playing pixies who leap around confusingly. You have a few basic combos, all of which are pulled off via prods of ▢ and △. You can use the Celestial Brush in combat too; confuse the



DARK WATERS: This evil darkness will soon be replaced with joy and colour.



DRAW THE LINE: Painting out things is almost a whole game in itself.

MUSIC MAKER: The enemies wield instruments that double as weapons, like this trumpet here.

BOSS OF ME: The bosses are difficult, but beating them gains you new Celestial Brush powers.

MOTHER NATURE

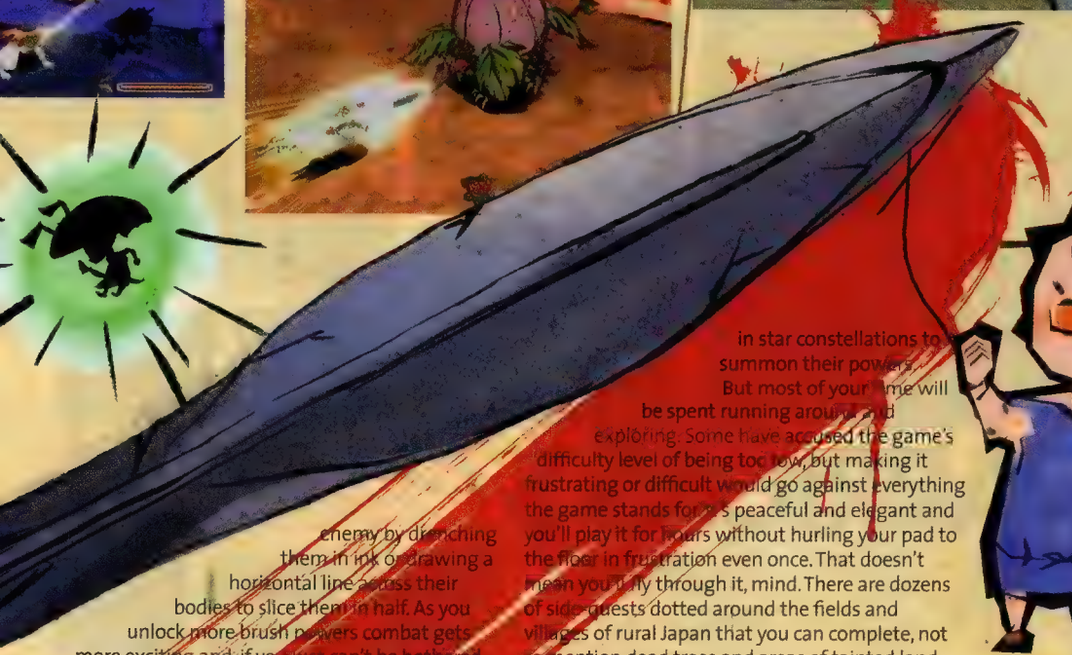
Never before has a game world felt so alive. There are so many tiny details, animations and spot effects going off at once that it shames the rigid, cardboard worlds most games present us with. Even the lush countryside areas of *San Andreas* look shoddy compared to *Okami*'s world. When you first arrive in one of the game's many open areas, a black and purple mist consumes most of the land. To vapourize this evil you have to complete objectives in a 'dungeon', mostly involving restoring nature in some way. When the evil mist takes over, everything freezes – including villagers, who you must rescue from their deep sleep.

BLOOM WITH A VIEW: Here we are, painting in flowers on the grass and admiring the view across the lake. Perfect.

ROCKY HORROR: Some backgrounds consist of these brilliantly stylish drawn-in mountains. A very cool effect.

SINK OR SWIM: You can frolic in the water, but only for a short while. Amaterasu isn't much of a swimmer, bless her.

SUMMER IN THE CITY: There's that sun again. To fully restore nature you need its glowing warmth to help the flowers bloom.



enemy by drenching them in ink or drawing a horizontal line across their bodies to slice them in half. As you unlock more brush powers combat gets more exciting and, if you just can't be bothered with another battle, you can leap through a portal and escape back to the outside world. Fighting pays off, though: accumulated points can be used to pump up various elements of Amaterasu, from the amount of ink she can carry to the size of her health bar. Later in the game she even gets access to a sword which she clenches in her teeth and swings around. This, predictably, makes combat a lot easier. To unlock brush powers you have to call upon a number of Shinto animal Gods and Goddesses. To do this you look towards the sky at special places and draw in star constellations to summon their powers.

But most of your time will be spent running around and exploring. Some have accused the game's difficulty level of being too low, but making it frustrating or difficult would go against everything the game stands for. It's peaceful and elegant and you'll play it for hours without hurling your pad to the floor in frustration even once. That doesn't mean you'll fly through it, mind. There are dozens of side-quests dotted around the fields and villages of rural Japan that you can complete, not to mention dead trees and areas of tainted land that you'll need to restore with the Celestial Brush. You can buy stuff too, including new fighting moves from a crotchety old dojo master, one of which lets you use the spinning shield thing on Amaterasu's back as a weapon.

So, what you'll have gathered now is that *Okami* is brilliant. It's managed to live up to the hype and has substance enough to live up to its breathtaking visuals. It won't be to everyone's tastes gameplay-wise due to its slow pace and low difficulty level, but most won't be able to resist its charms. High concept gaming? Nah, mate. Just *good* gaming. **Andy Kelly**

■ *Import* Okami *now.*

PSM VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Relaxing, effortless and thoroughly intuitive. – May be a little too easy for some.	+ Look at the screenshots. Amazing. – Nothing. Seriously. Absolutely nothing.	+ Atmospheric music and effects. – Slightly annoying 'voices'.

LIFESPAN

The game can be completed in 15 or so hours, but there are dozens of side-quests to extend the lifespan by a few more.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...

VIEWTIFUL JOE

IT'S WORSE THAN...

DRAGON QUEST

A joy to play. Whether you're restoring nature, battling enemies or exploring the Japanese countryside, *Okami* is perhaps the most beautiful game on PS2.

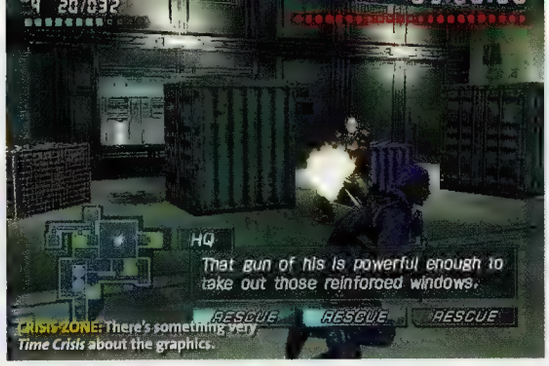
92

INFOSTRIP

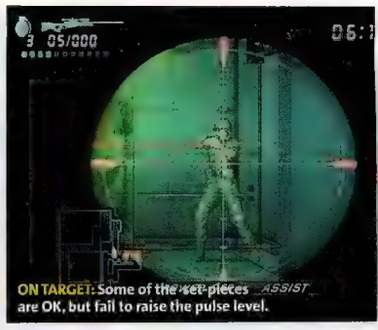
DETAILS
Developer: Cavia
Publisher: Koei
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 71KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: No

GAMEFAX
Action · Funny · Multi-tap · Sequel

"WINBACK IN CACK"



CRISIS ZONE: There's something very *Time Crisis* about the graphics.



ON TARGET: Some of the set-pieces are OK, but fail to raise the pulse level.

WINBACK 2 PROJECT POSEIDON

Yes, that's right – action stealth masterpiece *Winback* is *back!* Stick that up your Solid Snake!

The '2' bit is obvious – it's a sequel. The mention of Poseidon indicates part of the game is set on a boat... and *Winback*? Well that's anyone's guess. Stands out though – makes you think. Mainly you think 'what a crap name' but at least you *are* thinking.

The original *Winback* came across as a kind of *Metal Gear*-lite and as such was forgettable. For the sequel, things have been mixed up slightly, as the action is split between three SWAT-style cops who can all roll, shoot from cover and hit switches and, curiously, have exactly identical skills.

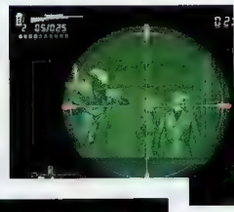
They may have the same skills, but you need more than one character, because every mission (hostage rescue, target takedown, etc) is approached from two directions. First you complete Entry A with the cute girl cop, for instance, then complete Entry B with the big black guy. Occasionally their paths cross, so your passage through the second part of the mission will be helped by stuff you did in the first.

This may suggest that there's some subtlety to *Winback*, but there really isn't. This is action gaming at its most stripped down, with bitesized objectives that involve blasting your way down grey, soulless corridors and flicking switches. It's repetitive, predictable and only challenging in a niggly, unfulfilling way.

But if you can play *Winback 2*, do – just 'cos the voice acting is so bad, it's charming. Never has being called a 'bar steward' in a vacant Californian drawl been so heartwarming. **Dave Harrison**

■ **Winback 2** *is out now.*

CO-OP RUN: Each level starts with the split-screen tactics discussion



PSM² VERDICT

A stupefyingly simple and basic action game that will only linger in the memory because of the laugh-out-loud funny voice acting.

53

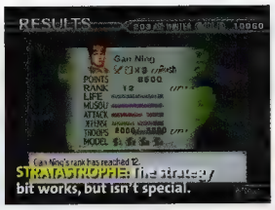
INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Omega Force
Publisher: Koei
Players: 1
Memory Save: 269KB
Widescreen: No
50-60Hz: No
Surround Sound: Yes

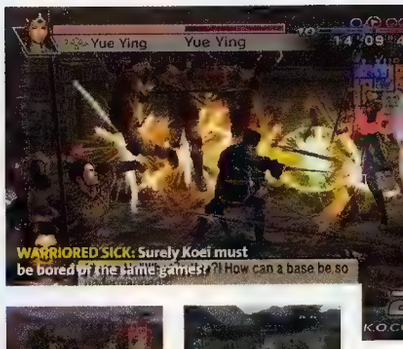
GAMEFAX
Action · Sequel · Strategy · Hard

"SAME OLD SAME OLD"

SLASHBACK: Huge numbers on screen doesn't impress now – we need more!



STRATATROPHIE: The strategy bit works, but isn't special.



WARRIORED SICK: Surely Koei must be bored of the same games?! How can a base be so

DYNASTY WARRIORS 5 EMPIRES

Is it just us, or is there now a new *Dynasty Warriors* in the shops every other week? Too much of a good thing.

Koei don't half know how to milk the *DW* series. While there might only four 'proper' sequels, there seem to be a constant stream of tweaked versions such as *Xtreme Legends* and, of course, *Empires* – which tries to thicken the watery *Dynasty Warriors* experience with some turn-based strategy.

This aspect of the game demands you conquer the whole ancient Japanese map in 100 turns. This can be achieved by selecting loyal lieutenants, forming alliances and recruiting soldiers, while maintaining land you already possess and invading land you don't. It's all very straightforward functional stuff, which might satisfy if the reward for your tactical nous wasn't just another round of harvesting idiot soldiers – which sadly is *Dynasty Warriors'* signature

Basically there's no point having huge battles featuring hundreds of enemy soldiers when they pose no threat whatsoever. They're just sword/pole/axe fodder – stooges trying to trick you into thinking you're ace. You're not, you're just flailing a stick around in a field while some idiots keep getting in the way. The only time *Dynasty Warriors* has ever been challenging is when an officer puts up resistance, but if one-on-one fighting is what you want, play *Soul Calibur III*.

That *Dynasty Warriors* as a series has endured the entire lifespan of PS2 suggests it has its fans, but surely they must be getting fewer with every identikit hack'n'slash mess. Koei undoubtedly have plans for a next-gen version, but if it's just *another* game exactly like all the previous versions, we're not sure who's going to care. **Dave Harrison**

■ DW5: Empires *is out now.*

PSM² VERDICT

The same old *Dynasty Warriors*, but with a competent-yet-underwhelming strategy game stapled onto it. Yet more of the same old thing unfortunately.

58

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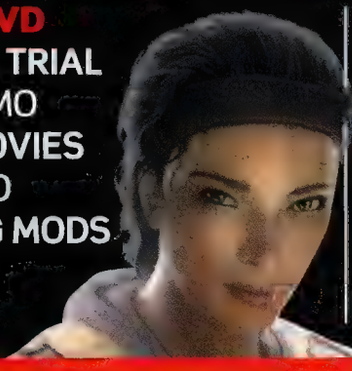

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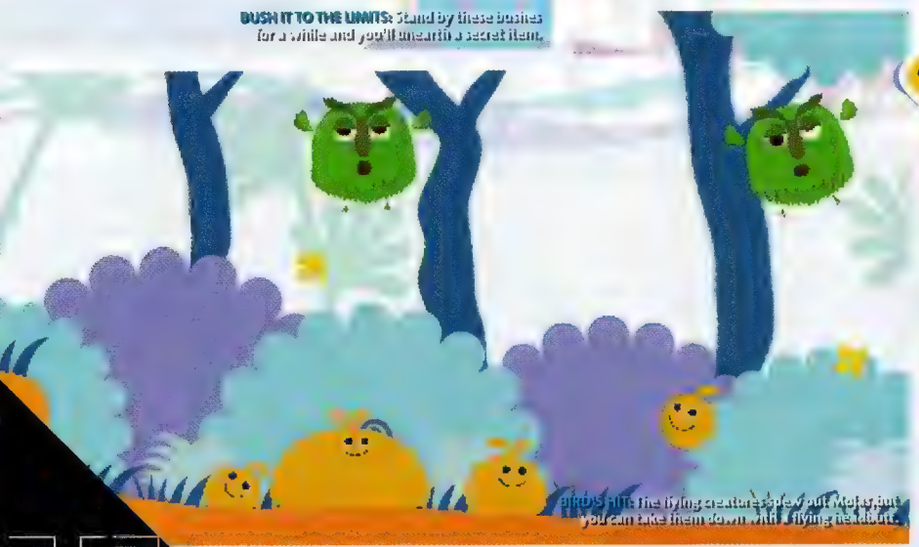
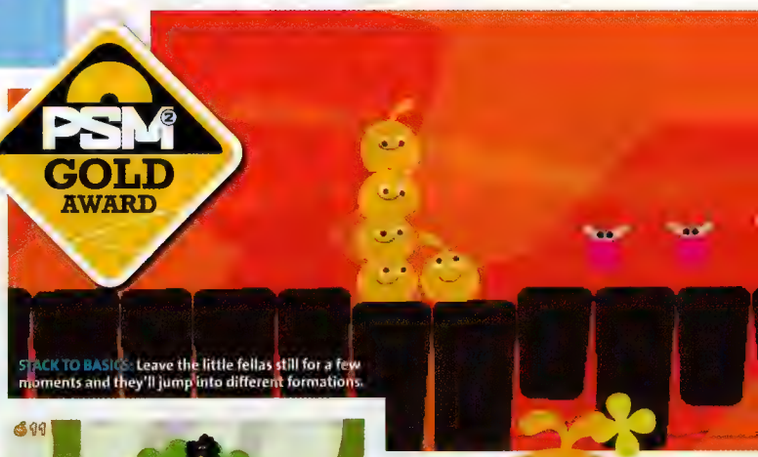
BUSH IT TO THE LIMITS: Stand by these bushes for a while and you'll unearth a secret item.

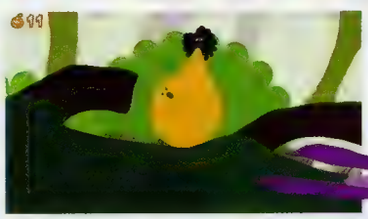


BIRDS HITS: The flying creatures spew out Mojas, but you can take them down with a flying headbutt.

PSM2 GOLD AWARD



STACK TO BASICS: Leave the little fellas still for a few moments and they'll jump into different formations.



PS2

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS

Developer: Sony
Publisher: Sony
Players: 1
Memory Save: 224KB

GAMEFAX

Original | Puzzle | Funny | Jap Curio

TRIVBURST

- Switch between the different types of LocoRoco, including a French lady one.
- Get involved with the minigames such as Crane MuiMui – like one of those grabbing machines in arcades.
- Collect pieces of kit to design a house for your LocoRoco.

PUBTALK

The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"In Japan, *LocoRoco* is known as *RokoRoko*. More? Erm, 'Loco' means crazy in Spanish and 'Roco' is an Austrian model train maker, which translates as Crazy Train Model Maker."

LOCOROCO

Anyone who doesn't smile while playing this little beauty is dead inside. Welcome to unbridled happiness.

In a gaming world rammed with guns, car jackings and roughing up women in the showers (cheers, *Hitman*) *LocoRoco* is a scorching beam of light ripping through the gloom. This blob-filled puzzler is like looking at games through a dribbling baby's eyes, with its bright and happy nappy stylings making you smile like an idiot. But there's nothing stupid about Sony's orange bolus. The cheery little thing epitomises how all PSP games should be – fun and simple.

Sticking two fingers up to the pointless PS2 ports dished out by most PSP developers, *LocoRoco* is easily the most original game on the system. The premise is simple – guide your grinning sphere (or spheres, at the various points when you need to split your LocoRoco into a mass of smaller blobs to progress) through varying lands of traps, slippery slopes and Mojas (more on them later). You play simply by tilting the screen with L1 and R1 and letting virtual gravity do the rest. While tricky to begin with – because jumping requires you to press both buttons simultaneously while positioning the screen – you'll soon be bouncing around like a possessed space-hopper. Even the most club-fingered gamer will bound through each world with ease.

But underneath its sugar-coated exterior are a myriad of secret passages waiting for the keen-eyed player, leading to bonus items and the chance of aceing the stage.

At times, *LocoRoco* encourages you to lay off the controls just so it can show off a little. One moment you're being swept across the screen in a slipstream – watching in awe as the air current forms love hearts before casting you into a pinball table-style area – and the next your LocoRocos are singing like choirboys to rouse a sleeping wall from its slumber so it'll move out of the way. They even lip-sync along to the music as you blob around. Brilliant. Along the way you'll meet a host of equally cute characters – like an owl that chews you up and spits you out into a different shape (rectangles or squares and the like, which

COLOUR ME GLAD: You get a variety of different colours and styles – like black which look like the Mojas.

STAR – AAAHH!: Who can forget the famous 'space desert' level? ...hello?

IS LOCOROCO THE HAPPIEST GAME EVER?

Honestly, you can't help but smile while playing *LocoRoco* – but what makes this fat-faced circle the most joyous experience on PSP? Let's look at the evidence...

LOCOROCOS ARE CUTE: Just look at their little faces – they're so happy! All the time!

EASY TO CONTROL: Two buttons are all you need to get around the game. That's amazing.

HAPPY FRIENDS: Most of LocoRoco's mates are equally cheerful, just like this pink chap.

SQUEEZY DOES IT: The puzzles are zen-balanced and slipping through gaps is all the rage here.

HIP TO BE SQUARE: You get chewed into various shapes, which change the way you play.

THEY'RE SELF AWARE: Leave them to do their own thing and they'll perform different tricks.

The MON£Y $HOT

Sleepy? Let the little fellas stir you from your slumber through the medium of song as they do with the Sun, Moon and even the tiny MuiMui creatures.

LEVEL UP: This pink thing acts as an elevator to take you up to high places.

BLOB-A-JOB: You need to hold ◎ in order to get them to morph into one big blob.

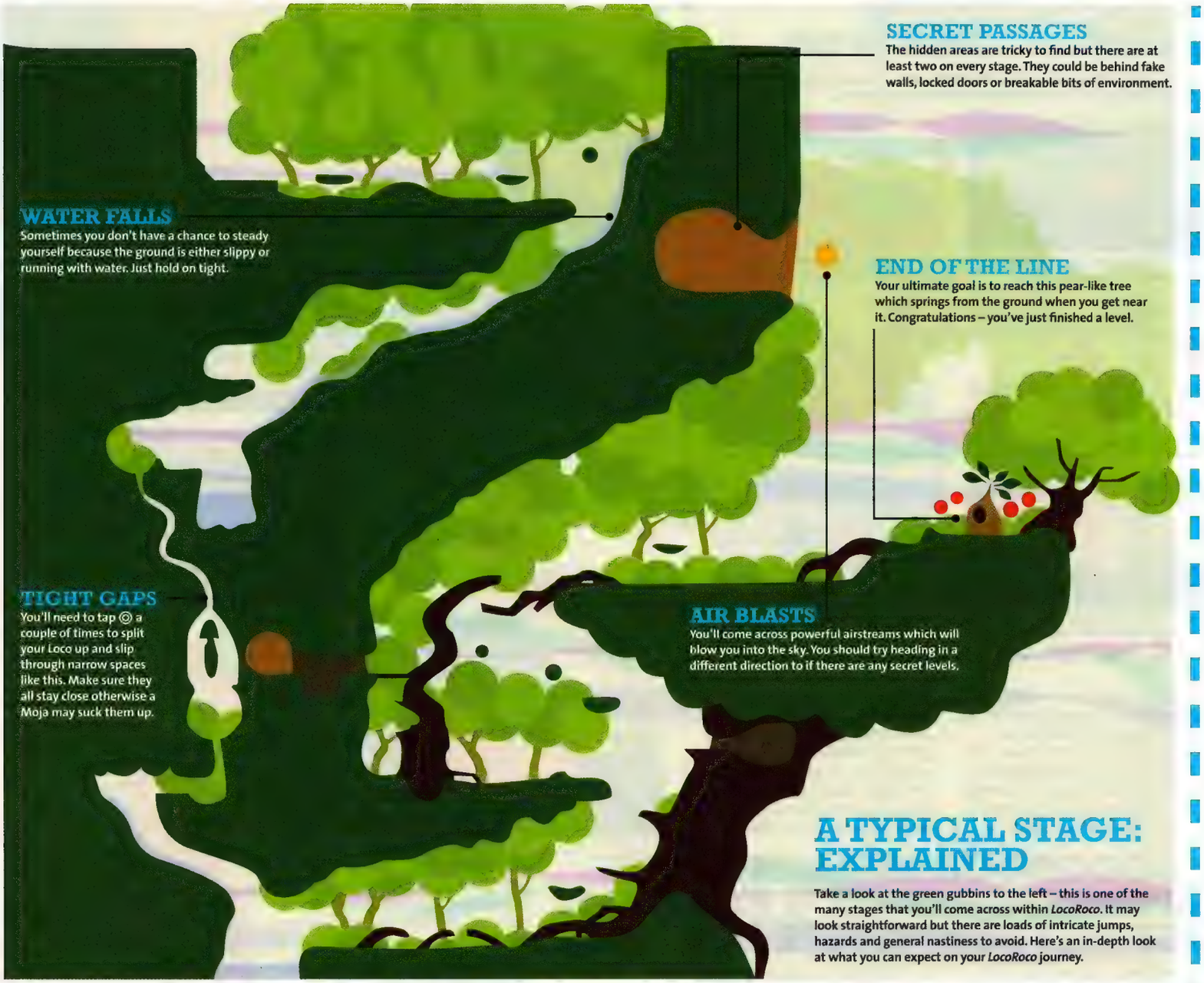
helps squeeze through awkwardly-shaped gaps), angry green platforms which fire you high into the sky should you step on their heads – and MuiMuis. These little blue fellas are hidden around the world and reward you with furniture parts to create a house for your LocoRoco to live in.

GOING LOCO

To be honest, we've never played a game so odd and yet so utterly entertaining. What with its bizarre settings (a whale's belly being one), unique control system and lashings of effortless humour, it's like the first time we played *Katamari* – but far more infectious. The different LocoRocos should be downright annoying – especially the orange one which sounds like a gang of whiny kids – but when they whimper in fear as a Moja approaches, you can't help wanting to steer them clear of danger like an protective parent – shouting at the menace to stay away from your children. The bright and bold visuals draw you in like wasps to lager and the lovely touches – such as the tickle-roots, which make LocoRoco giggle and shake – are fine examples of attention to detail.

"LOCOROCO BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO PSP – IT'S THE GAME PSP WAS DESPERATE FOR"

Then there are the not-so-nice Mojas, who are trying to take over the world and will suck miniature LocoRocos away from your giant mass. Lose them all and you're dead. These dreadlocked enemies range in size, from super-small limpets that weigh you down to absolute bloody giants, although you can butt them to death if you're quick enough. Fortunately, that's it as far as the violence goes in *LocoRoco*. And a very good thing too.


SECRET PASSAGES
The hidden areas are tricky to find but there are at least two on every stage. They could be behind fake walls, locked doors or breakable bits of environment.
WATER FALLS
Sometimes you don't have a chance to steady yourself because the ground is either slippy or running with water. Just hold on tight.
END OF THE LINE
Your ultimate goal is to reach this pear-like tree which springs from the ground when you get near it. Congratulations – you've just finished a level.
TIGHT GAPS
You'll need to tap ◎ a couple of times to split your Loco up and slip through narrow spaces like this. Make sure they all stay close otherwise a Moja may suck them up.
AIR BLASTS
You'll come across powerful airstreams which will blow you into the sky. You should try heading in a different direction to if there are any secret levels.

A TYPICAL STAGE: EXPLAINED

Take a look at the green gubbins to the left – this is one of the many stages that you'll come across within *LocoRoco*. It may look straightforward but there are loads of intricate jumps, hazards and general nastiness to avoid. Here's an in-depth look at what you can expect on your *LocoRoco* journey.

As for minigames, *LocoRoco* is packed with novelty bites of action, like the MuiMui Crane, which is similar to the grabber game which robs kids in arcades. And each has to be paid for with the insects you collect along the way – so you can't just play them all the time.

LocoRoco breathes new life into PSP – it's the game that Sony's handheld was desperate for. Anyone who claims to enjoy games will have to have something seriously wrong in their mind-tank if they don't love this one. **Nathan Irvine**

■ *LocoRoco is out on June 23rd.*

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Puzzling that never fails to raise a smile. – It feels a little bit samey during prolonged sessions.	+ The Locos and levels are beautifully designed. – Some jumps are difficult to measure.	+ The Locos all sing the music. Genius. – The shrill childish voices grate after a while.

LIFESPAN
You can jump back into past stages to set/smash records while searching for all the hidden goodies. And there are a lot.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
EVERYTHING ELSE ON PSP!

IT'S WORSE THAN...
NOTHING

The happiest game on PSP will cheer you up no end. It's simple to pick up and play and equally hard to put down. This is the strongest handheld title we've played, well, ever.

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GET YOUR F***ING C*** IN MY P***Y	258158
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VICKY POLLARD - LITTLE BRITAIN	258468
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WORLD CUP TONES (real)

WE LOVE YOU ENGLAND	257311
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GREAT ESCAPE CHANT	257315
FAT LES - VINDALOO	258675

REAL SOUNDS (real)

DONALD DUCK GETTING A BJ (HILARIOUS)	258056
THE GREATEST FEMALE ORGASM EVER!!	258031
PULP FICTION - PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN	258051
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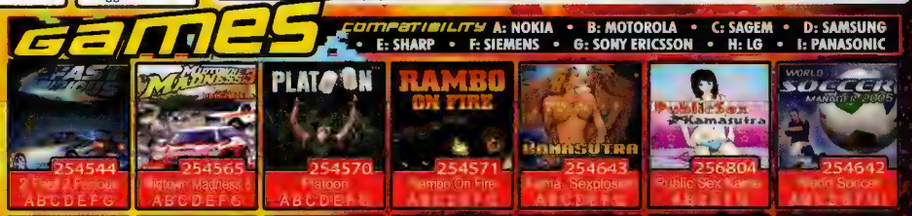

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ROON ARMY: Rooney bangs in yet another corker past a helpless keeper.

STADIA AS SHE GOES

Win the trophy and you unlock video tours of each of the World Cup stadia. Here's a 'thrilling' look at Dortmund's Westfalenstadion...

STADIUM ROCKS: *Wooow*, it's a view of the stadium from the pitch! There's *no-one there!* Look, rows and rows of empty seats! *Aah! Ooh!* Some grey *steps!* And – *oh my God!* – a *corner flag!* Wow-*ee!* This *certainly* conveys the heart-pounding excitement of the World Cup! Help, we're hyperventilating!

PITCH ACTION: You get to see plenty of the pitch, so there's no excuse for stray passes.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

The MON£¥ $HOT
Here's Portugal in action, doubtless promising much but actually delivering quite little. Just like in every World Cup so far, really. Ho hum.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 103kb

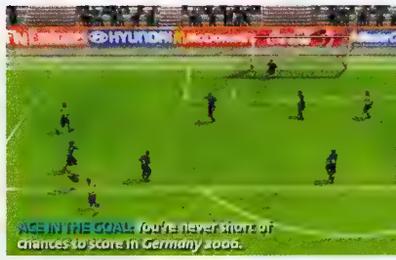
GAMEFAX
Sequel · Sports · Easy · Network Play

TRIVBURST
- Take any national team to the World Cup. Yes, even Wales.
- Play against a mate over Wi-Fi.
- Take a video tour of all the tournament's stadia.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The five worst teams at the moment, according to FIFA, are Aruba, Montserrat, Guam, the Caicos Islands and American Samoa."

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY

Hold the World Cup in your own hands! Well, not really, of course, but it's as close as you're ever going to get.



ACE IN THE GOAL: You're never short of chances to score in *Germany 2006*.

If you're not one of the people who mess about in menus before starting a game, you might be surprised how easy *FIFA World Cup* appears. We were. Before we knew it, we'd blitzed Holland 5-0 in the quarter finals without letting a goal in along the way. This made us a bit suspicious, so we checked the menus. *FIFA*'s default difficulty is set to 'amateur'. Tsk. So we played the last two matches on Pro level, and still won the trophy. Well done us.

So the lesson there is "always check you're not playing on the difficulty level for idiots with sausage fingers". Or play a harder, better game. What we have here is the third *FIFA* game in PSP's short lifespan. And this newie is more or less the same as its PS2 bro, which means it suffers the same faults – namely, that no matter how high you ramp the difficulty level, it seems more to affect how good the opposition keeper is than how well the other team actually plays, and that the sliding tackle is near-impossible to use without shattering someone's kneecaps. Our tip: just jockey the man in possession for as long as you can – he'll almost certainly give the ball up in the end.

"YES, WE DID KNOW ENGLAND BEAT GERMANY IN THE 1966 FINAL, TA"

POLISHED AS EVER

But despite that, *FIFA* plays as slick a game of football as you'll find on the handheld, with crisp, pacey action and goalmouth incidents by the wagonload. And, of course, it's all dressed up in the usual *FIFA* finery – Townsend and Tylsdley are on commentary, Did You Know questions pop up while matches load (although, yes, we *did* know England beat Germany 4-2 in the 1966 final, ta) and another collection of EA – sigh – 'trax' soundtrack it all. Every team in the world is present too, should you be inclined to take the likes of St Kitts or, erm, Chad (in Africa, on the edge of the Sahara, as if you didn't know) to global glory.

Germany 2006, though, isn't quite as good as last time – not so much due to the issues above, but 'cos 'normal' *FIFA*s have a variety of competitions. This, for obvious reasons, has just one. There *are* extra challenges offered – come back from 2-0 down with 20 minutes to go; prevent Italy from losing against, er, Fiji – but they won't keep you going forever. Still, it's another very good, but not great, *FIFA*. Did you really expect anything else? **David Cook**

■ Germany 2006 *is out now.*

PRESENT AND CORRECT: The presentation is as immaculate as you'd expect from EA.

PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Slick, swish, smooth and lots of other 's' words. – The AI's a bit suspect and the tackling a little ropey.	+ Slick, swish, smoo– wait, we did that one. – The special blue ball is invisible against the pitch.	+ Tyldsley and Townsend continue on commentary. – Tyldsley and Townsend continue on commentary.

LIFESPAN
There are only so many times you can win the World Cup before it gets a tiny bit repetitive. (Though probably not in real life.)
MINUTES … YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN… FIFA 2005
IT'S WORSE THAN… FIFA '06

As entertaining as you'd expect, but *Germany 2006* doesn't quite take its chance to dominate the handheld football scene. We could really do with an A-grade footie sim on PSP, y'know.

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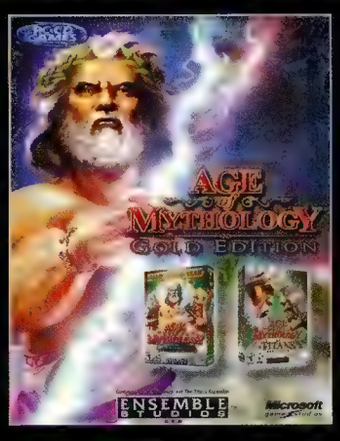

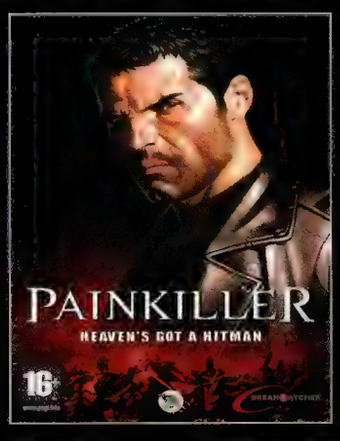

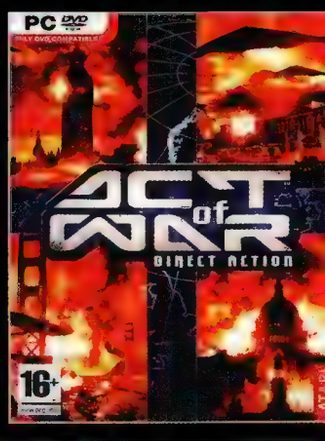

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0:00 3(Fri). Mar. 2006
The MONEY SHOT
The phrase "Look, we won the battle of Agincourt, OK?" is sadly not included for post-football discussions. A crying shame, really.
Yeah.
HONTO

FRENCH KISS: Max helpfully holds up a flag, just in case you've forgotten where you are.

PSM2 BRONZE AWARD

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sony
Publisher: Sony
Players: 1
Memory Save: 109kb

GAMEFAX
Original · Stupid · Funny · Network Play

TRIVBURST
- Learn to communicate in six different languages.
- Over 3000 foreign phrases to learn.
- Speak into PSP's mic and look like an idiot in public. Brilliant!

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"Oil Barman! Futatsu biru o kudasai – and make it snappy!"

TALKMAN

Pourquoi vous me montrez une conversation un oiseau bleu? And other handy phrases...

Ah, French. Language of love. You spend three years learning it at school, watch all of Luc Besson's films and somehow the only thing you can say when you meet a pretty gallic girl is 'You am pretty. Me, you get out sometime, OK?' Bah.

This is where *Talkman* comes in. Originally released in Asian – featuring Korean, Chinese and Japanese – it's now been released in a European version (they've kept the Japanese in, handily), which should let you order bratwurst, find la piscine, talk to the gendarmes and generally feel at home in continental Europe – fear of getting your PSP nicked aside.

For the unfamiliar, here's how it works – you speak words into a screw-on mic that goes on the top of your PSP. Max the talking bird guesses what you're trying to say based on keywords ('want', 'coffee', 'pretty face' or whatever) and gives you a list of options. You pick the appropriate one, then shove your PSP towards the doctor/blacksmith/pretty girl as Max says the phrase in your chosen language. He'll also offer a list of replies that they can select (from 'Yes, let's' to 'please go away'), allowing for seamless cross-cultural communication. More than 3,000 phrases, sub-divided into sections like 'at the doctor's' or 'on the beach' mean that you'll never be stuck for some charming badinage. In theory.

In practice, you'll quickly skip the speech-recognition bit as it's quicker and more reliable to go straight for the cheat-sheet list of options. Although the speech recognition's still impressive, whispering into your PSP simply isn't that practical and is much, much more embarrassing than fiddling with a phrasebook. Carrying your fragile, expensive PSP onto a beach or into a nightclub just seems impractical and using it to describe your symptoms to a medico

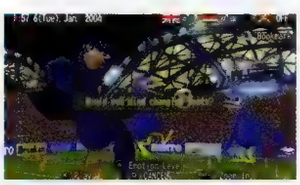
"WHISPERING INTO YOUR PSP ISN'T THAT PRACTICAL AND CAN BE A BIT EMBARRASSING"

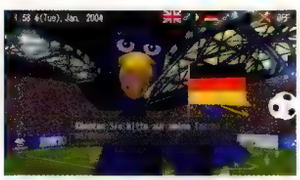
BENICIO DEL TORO: Sony haven't included a selection of bullfighting slang. It's political correctness gone mad.

SEXY CHICKS: What are those things in the background? Max's brothers?

SURELY THAT'S A FOUL, ARBITRE?

With the World Cup mere days away, what better way to hone your language skills than by trotting off to Germany and yelling some choice phrases? *Talkman* offers a variety of footballing phrases, from 'Foul!' to 'What's that player called?' but is sadly deficient in crowd chants and colourful insults.


SEAT HERE: Look, it works! Oh, you would mind changing seats? Sorry...


PAYING THE PENALTY: What's German for 'Oh no, not another penalty shoot-out?'

KOMMEN SIE BITTE?

Hawk-eyed PSP owners will spot *Talkman*'s unnerving disclaimer as it loads – "Warning: in the event of an emergency, find someone who speaks English." Fair enough, of course. But what if you're just a happy-go-lucky lad, out for a good time in Berlin? Does *Talkman* actually work? We sent Nathan to Germany to get us all some World Cup tickets.

HEY! A REAL GERMAN FRAULEIN! SHE'S BOUND TO KNOW WHERE THE WORLD CUP IS. I'LL JUST SWITCH MY PSP ON. NOW...
NATHAN HAS BEEN WALKING AROUND BERLIN, BEFUDDLED, FOR TEN HOURS NOW...
TEN MINUTES LATER....
"I'D LIKE TO SEE THE FOOTBALL, PLEASE." NOW I'LL JUST... WAIT, "I WANT A COFFEE?" WHAT?
ANOTHER TEN MINUTES LATER.
RIGHT, I'LL TRY READING IT: "ICH MOCHTE EIN, UM, BALLE...",
FINALLY...
NOT QUITE THE RESULT I WAS LOOKING FOR. I'LL TRY SOMEONE ELSE...
ALL I ASKED FOR WAS DIRECTIONS TO THE BOTTSCHAFTER...
THREE HOURS LATER, AT A 'MEN ONLY' BAR...

(yes, the phrase 'It's really itchy' is included) seems faintly wrong, somehow. On-street testing also suggests that, with *Talkman Europe*, the problems are a bit more cultural. While a lot of Japanese people don't speak much English – and are often delighted to be spoken to by a talking bird – many of our chums across the channel speak better English than a typical Big Brother contestant. Confront them with a yapping blue mascot – especially one who accompanies his requests for a date with sham-blubbering or streams of confetti – and they'll very likely be unimpressed. And, as a final, practical moan, the fact that the dialogue's split into sections means you often won't be able to find a phrase where you'd like (the 'Meeting People' and 'On The Street' sections don't always include the phrases you'd expect, for instance), so you'll either assume the sentence you're looking for doesn't exist or have to endure a lengthy loading pause to find it.

LISTEN UP

What *Talkman* does do well, though, is teach you some language basics. With an emphasis on speaking and listening – you can read the phrases, but it isn't exactly encouraged – *Talkman* offers a set of games that reinforce the basics in every area. What's most impressive is the pronunciation game – *Talkman* gives you a phrase, then challenges you to repeat it, grading your performance based on how close you come. In the Japanese/Chinese version, this was a bit tricky – tonal pronunciation and odd syllables meant that, unless you were already acquainted with the languages, you were probably going to make mistakes and reinforce glaring errors in your own brain-tank. Here, though, the similarities in language – and the fact that you probably already know them from school/films/under-the-counter gentlemen's viewing – makes them a much more effective learning tool. A pick-the-right-answer game does similar things for your listening comprehension, which is often the trickiest thing about learning a foreign language.

Ultimately, *Talkman* isn't a necessity, a radical new way of chatting to our vin-swilling continental pals or a replacement for a proper language course – but it isn't completely useless either. If you actually want to learn a language, you still have to put the effort in, or get an Italian girlfriend or something. If you're just off on a quick booze-jaunt to Calais, a tatty four-quid phrasebook'll give you more words for your money. But as a way of actually practicising the words – preferably in the privacy of your own home – there's nothing quite like *Talkman*. Beaucoup, Sony - tres beacoup. **Joel Snape**

■ Talkman *is out on June 16th.*

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ You'll faff about with *Talkman* for hours. – The 'games' could do with being a bit quicker.	+ It's not really about the graphics, is it? – Max isn't our favourite mascot of all time...	+ From what we can make out, the accents are good. – It's American English, which is a bit annoying.

LIFESPAN

With four languages to learn, it's undeniable value for money. But you probably won't learn all four.

MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
SHOUTING

IT'S WORSE THAN...
A PHRASEBOOK

Not indispensable, but certainly interesting. Couldn't they use a more loveable mascot for *Talkman 2*, though? (Note to Sony: this does not mean Crash Bandicoot. Thanks.)

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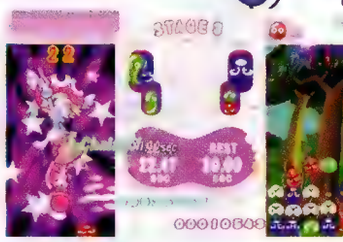
The MONEY SHOT
Notching up a perfect chain of lines during the fever mode and clearing the screen gives you a real sense of accomplishment. For a while, anyway.

POP-CYCLE: The more chains that you can put together, the better chance you have of scuppering your foe.

YOU GIVE ME FEVER

The novelty of this new episode in the *Puyo Pop* series is the Fever mode. This is where you rack up the big points. Set rows are placed on the screen and then it's up to you to ignite the chain reaction by connecting your next drop in the right place. Potentially, this can clear the screen with *Lumines*-style combos and put your opponent in all sorts trouble. But it's tricky to time correctly, so make sure you're concentrating, OK?



HOUSE OF CHAIN: One sweet combination can instantly win a match, but you have to work for it.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sega
Publisher: Ignition
Players: 1-2
Memory Save: 330KB

GAMEFAX
Puzzle
Jap Curio
Network Play
Addictive

TRIVBURST
- 13 characters to battle against or control.
- Fever mode allows you to chain quickfire combos.
- Hook up with a friend via Wi-Fi and go head-to-head two-player.

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"The Puyos (read 'blobs') were enemies in a 1989 role-playing game called *Madou Monogatari*."

PUYO POP FEVER

Once you Puyo Pop, you... well, you will stop, actually, and probably a bit sooner than is strictly healthy.

We despair at puzzle games that needlessly crowbar in a 'story' to connect each gaming section. *Puyo Pop Fever* is one of these. For the love of Jeebus, no one cares about the preamble, especially not some ludicrous plot about searching for a magical *cane*. It's just in the way. Sigh. Anyway, it's a good job *Puyo Pop Fever* can at least deliver an entertaining piece of puzzlery.

Puyo Pop Fever slaps you with a helping of colour co-ordinating action. Linking up four or more similar blobs will not only lower the height of your column, it also raises your score and stifles your opponent. It does this by firing clear shapes into the mix, meaning your foe can't get the ones they want and builds their count up until it tips the maximum and ends the game. Easy. But it's not entirely straightforward, as the AI hits back with frustratingly skilful counter attacks at every opportunity. Even the last stage of normal level took a maddening amount of restarts and swears before we aced it. All the while, Amitie (the lead in single-player mode) gets on your nerves as she gleefully praises clever opponent moves. Why isn't she on our side, eh?

Surprisingly, you don't need two PSPs to have a head-to-head. Just grab a mate, hold the machine lengthways and you can battle against each other. Good, eh? But this is where the originality starts and ends, because the rest of the action plays out exactly the same throughout – you challenge someone new, the shapes drop a little quicker and that's it. To be honest, we'd rather play *Lumines*. At least it doesn't try to break up the stages with pointless chit-chat. **Nathan Irvine**

"GRAB A MATE AND HOLD THE PSP LENGTHWAYS AND YOU CAN HAVE A TWO-PLAYER BATTLE"

BACK IN STACK

Puyo Pop is a mixed bag. Beneath its sugary exterior, there's a perfectly formed puzzle game here. It doesn't necessarily require you to make chains quickly – rather, encouraging you to create a stack that can be wiped out with one carefully placed blob. Do it, and you'll open fever mode (see You Give Me Fever).

■ Puyo Pop Fever *is out now.*

SHAPE SHIFTERS: Watch out for the different shapes to get the upper hand.

PSM² VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Solid puzzle action that's quite fun. – It becomes repetitive all too quickly though.	+ Bright and colourful blobs, nice character design. – The stages never vary much in appearance.	+ The sugary music is a good accompaniment... – ...but it becomes annoying almost instantly.

LIFESPAN
There are four single-player modes and the compulsory Wi-Fi link-ups. Unfortunately, the difficulty will test your patience no end.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
FRANTIX

IT'S WORSE THAN...
LUMINES

It's a solid puzzle game that doesn't do anything very wrong. Sadly, nor does it do anything we haven't seen before, and at thirty notes you'd be much better off with top PSP puzzler *Lumines*.

67

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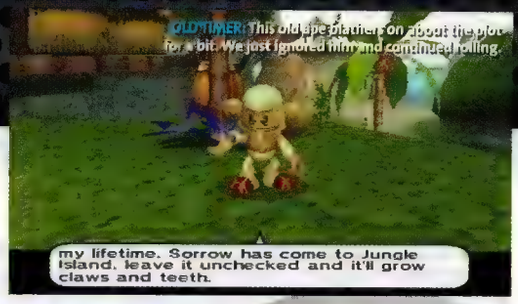
TOTAL FILM



OLDTIMER: This old ape blathers on about the plot for a bit. We just ignored him and continued rolling.

The MONEY SHOT
Will rolling around in a ball ever get old? No, it won't, because it's the best thing ever. Even with crap tacked-on adventure bits that sour the mood.

BEE GONE

Here's an example of the missions you'll be expected to perform. This beekeeper's bees have buggered off somewhere, so it's up to you to collect them and bring back to your monkey mate. You do this by bouncing up and down on flowers and cracking their hives open. Simple? It would be, if the fiddly control system didn't render it near-impossible. And it's a bit dull, besides. Like most missions.

BEE SHARP: Take the bees back to your mate before they fly away. It's not very exciting.

INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: Sega
Publisher: Sega
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 343kb

GAMEFAX
Adventure, Puzzle, Stupid, Network Play

TRIVBURST
- Four characters, all with individual mission sets.
- Unlock new powers, including a spring-loaded boxing glove.
- But why don't the apes suffocate in their balls?

PUBTALK
The smart arse thing to say down the boozer.
"*Super Monkey Ball* was originally intended to be a GameCube exclusive, but it soon appeared on Xbox and PS2. Typical."

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

Taking the genius concept of monkeys in balls... and stuffing things up with a rubbish RPG element. Pff.

Can you imagine Team *Silent Hill* doing a kart racing game? Or Kojima producing the next *Pro Evo*? No, you can't, because that would be stupid. Like *Super Monkey Ball Adventure*, which takes the brilliantly simple idea of rolling a ball down a hill and ruins it by turning it into an RPG for babies. Sure, you still get to roll a monkey around in an orb, but you also have to awkwardly tumble around tiny villages chatting to other monkeys, *who aren't even in balls*. Rubbish.

You start off by choosing your monkey. All the gang are here – Aiai, Meemee, Gongon and Baby – and the mission objectives in each level change depending on who you decide to play as. There's some kind of plot in there, but we're not even going to bother recounting it because it's ridiculous. And anyway, we don't need any kind of validation – we're a monkey in a ball and we're happy with that. Don't complicate things with an explanation, Sega.

"WE'D HAVE LIKED A REGULAR MONKEY BALL GAME BETTER"

STICK 'EM UP

Those villages we mentioned earlier are populated by characters who dish out missions to your monkey, a typical example of which is recounted at the top of the page. Not one sticks in our mind as entertaining but plenty resonate as being irritating – mainly because of PSP's rubbish analogue stick, which may as well not even be there for all the good it does. The controls are the biggest issue, which isn't really the game's fault, we know. But it sours any enjoyment you may have otherwise eked out of the game.

The minigames are still brilliant though. Monkey Fight, Monkey Racing, Monkey Target – they're all there and, if you can get past the wonky controls, are as fun as ever. They're also perfect for Wi-Fi multiplayer, so if you've a mate with the game you'll have loads more fun than you will on your own in story mode. But the new adventure stuff is basically a bit rubbish and we'd have liked another regular *Monkey Ball* game better. Perhaps next time around, eh? **Andy Kelly**

■ Monkey Ball Adventure *is out now.*

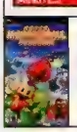
PSM2 VERDICT

GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	SOUND
+ Monkeys in balls is still a brilliant concept. – The adventure concept however wis a bit pointless.	+ Nice and colourful. They do the job well enough. – The frame rate stutters a bit sometimes.	+ Cheerful music that just avoids being annoying. – The squeaks of the monkeys grind the nerves.

LIFESPAN
Potentially endless if you have someone to play with regularly over Wi-Fi, but short-lived otherwise.
MINUTES — YEARS

IT'S BETTER THAN...
FRANTIX

IT'S WORSE THAN...
DAXTER


Not as good as a regular *Monkey Ball* game would've been. The adventure stuff feels tacked-on and the PSP's rubbish analogue stick makes control a bit of a nightmare.

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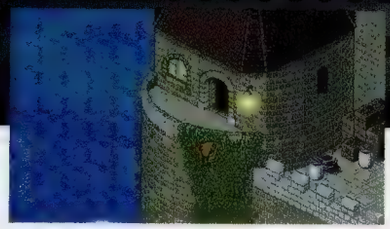
"No F***ing Lightweights!"

computerandvideogames.com

"Addicted since 1981, reborn in 2006"



SCENE SICKNESS: No creepy ruins or scurvy-infested pirates' ships here. Oh, no.

BUCKSHOT: Getting blasted out of a cannon is the quickest way to travel in this game.

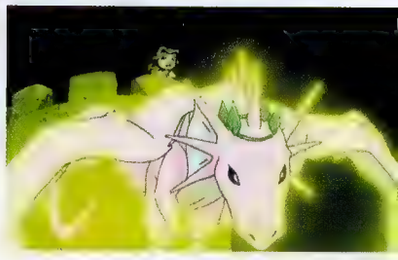
INFOSTRIP

DETAILS
Developer: G-Artists
Publisher: Ignition
Players: 1
Memory Save: 992KB

GAMEFAX
RPG · Old school · Goblins · For kids

POPOLOCROIS

A role-player that's so cute it could advertise extra-soft Hello Kitty themed hypoallergenic Andrex.



A few minutes into *Popolocrois* and an enormous sense of déjà-vu washes over us. Haven't we played this before? Oh, no, that's right, it just feels that way because everything in this RPG has been pressed straight out of the gaming cliché mould and sprinkled with a liberal helping of cutesy-dust.

You play as Prince Pietro, a young scamp charged with saving the kingdom from an evil ice-demon. Along the way, you're forced to battle it out in a turn-based style, with some ridiculous enemies, ranging from radishes, pandas and moose (mice?) all the way up to orcs and odd (but still fluffy) demon-beasts. Discover treasure chests, collect keys, add twatty characters to your party... the list goes on. Although uninspiring, everything in the game is reasonably smooth and intuitive. The learning curve is excellent, as you follow Pietro's childhood quest into his adult life, and the pace does pick up after the game's sluggish start.

Stat-gatherers and fans of the super-deformed will appreciate the vanilla-flavoured adventuring that *Popolocrois* has to offer – hell, they probably won't even skip the cascade of inane dialogue. However, anyone after genuine thrills, or traces of originality visible to the naked eye, will be disappointed. **Andy Hartup**

■ Popolocrois *is in shops right now*

PSM2 VERDICT

Hardcore goblin-botherers will probably scoff at its fluffiness, but anyone after an inoffensive, by-the-numbers RPG to waste a little time with *could* give *Popolocrois* a stab. If they had to.

62

FLASHBACK: The stuff of wonder, this once was. Well, it sort of was, anyway.

INFOSTRIP

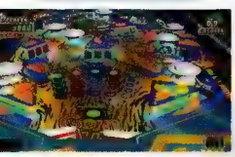
DETAILS
Developer: System 3
Publisher: System 3
Players: 1-4
Memory Save: 128KB

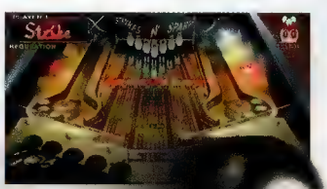
GAMEFAX
Official license · Retro · Shit · Multi-player

GOTTLIEB PINBALL CLASSICS

Easier than carrying a real pinball table around in your pocket, but slightly more embarrassing.

£20 quid for a jumped up mobile phone game? Surely there are better things to spend your gaming cash on? Perhaps, but for five minutes of retro relaxation while you're waiting for dinner to cook, or the bus to arrive, *Gottlieb Pinball* is surely ideal? Well, you'd think so. Most of the time, this take on the classic pub-pastime is technically sound (aside from the odd glitch, like the ball getting stuck in a flipper). The physics are spot on, the pace is precise, and the bleeping, kerchinging sound effects make you feel as if you're actually stood in a smokey French bar, a Blackpool back-street arcade, or one of the other remaining bastions of real pinball.





The problem is, we remember playing *Pinball Fantasies* in 1992 and it's still a better game. The reason for this is the Gottlieb license. Unless you're some sort of pinball anorak, the chance to play on recreations of *these* flippered-machines is perhaps the weakest selling point for a game ever, because the majority are so unimaginative. The likes of El Dorado and High Roller may have been the pride of the arcade when they came out, but now they're no more than minigame wannabes and digital firewood. Forget it. **Andy Hartup**

■ Pinball Classics *is in shops right now*

PSM2 VERDICT

Even the innovative 'turn your PSP lengthways' screen mode can't wave it. It's OK for a quickie, but with such lacklustre tables, you'll never be able to form a lasting relationship with it.

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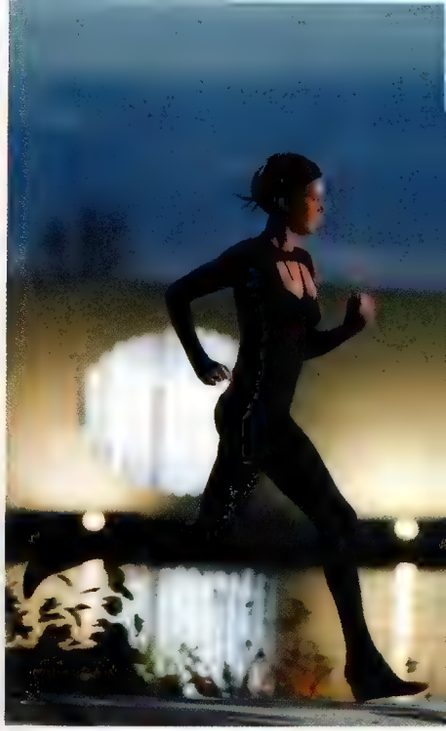

"THE LYCRA BODYSUIT IS ALL THIS FILM'S GOT GOING FOR IT"

AEON FLUX

Just like the game – see page 92 – this really flux balls...

Call it the Oscar Curse. Halle Berry went from critical acclaim in Monster's Ball to a Golden Raspberry for Catwoman. And now Charlize Theron is suffering the same, as she steps from the Oscar podium after her win for serial killer drama Monster and straps on a Lycra bodysuit to play Aeon Flux.

Based on the weird but always watchable MTV 'toon, the movie tried to bottle the kinetic madness that was the point of Aeon's TV incarnation. Director Karyn Kusama, fresh from indie favourite Girlfight, was supposed to add heart and real human emotion. But somewhere along the line – probably during one of the dozen or so script drafts – it all got a little screwed up.

"93 MINUTES OF CHARLIZE THERON IN HER NIGHTIE WOULD BE MUCH BETTER THAN THIS"

The end result? A decidedly dodgy cookie-cutter sci-fi adventure with a beautiful star, some flash visuals and very little else. We're transported to a future Earth devastated by a man-made disease. The only safe place is Bregna, a domed city ruled by a benevolent congress of scientists. But a rebel group suspects that the government isn't telling the truth about the world – and despatches their best assassin (Aeon Flux) to kill the chairman. And guess what? Turns out there *is* a conspiracy. Which at least gives Flux something to do. Let's face it, 93 minutes of Charlize Theron wearing the gaudy nightdress she's first seen in wouldn't really be all that entertai... No, hang on. That would be a *much* better film than the one we get.

STARRING
- Charlize Theron
- Marton Csokas
- Jonny Lee Miller
- Sophie Okonedo
- Frances McDormand
- Pete Postlethwaite
- Paterson Joseph

DIRECTOR
- Karyn Kusama

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

THIS FLUX

Sadly what we're actually treated to by Aeon Flux is a bog-standard adventure/drama. It's got the odd touch of human emotion and one or two decent set pieces, but it really doesn't add up to much. Charlize does her best, but a lot of the acting by everyone around her simply stumbles into cliché and the story heads off in directions that most viewers will see coming a mile off, before then taking a left turn into wackiness that just ends up being less "arty and complex" and more "bleedin' confusing". Maybe watch it for Charlize, but switch your brain off for the rest of it. Or maybe just don't watch it at all.

PSM2 VERDICT

MOVIE	GOOD+BAD	DVD
+ Great sets, and, well... it's Charlize Theron. – Dreadful acting for almost the entire flick.	+ A good concept, without doubt... – But it's wasted on this tedious sludge.	+ Decent commentaries to listen to. – Five standard featurettes that don't excite.

EXTRAS

The commentaries try and explain the many changes brought on by all the script drafts, but everyone just ends up sounding a little too proud of their efforts.

IT'S BETTER THAN...
UNDERWORLD

IT'S WORSE THAN...
AEON FLUX: THE CARTOON

More science friction than science fiction, this is a piss-poor effort, all in all, only redeemed by the fact that you're watching Charlize Theron in lycra...

35

"WAR IS ~~HELL~~ A BIT TEDIOUS"

JARHEAD

Waiting for war is hell through Jake Gyllenhaal's Gulf War-weary eyes. Atten-hut!

STARRING
- Jake Gyllenhaal
- Jamie Foxx
- Scott MacDonald
- Lo Ming
- Peter Sarsgaard
- Damion Poitier
- Riad Galayini
- Craig Coyne

DIRECTOR
- Sam Mendes

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

It's not every day you get a war movie where there's almost no war. But that's the case with Jarhead, a different kind of battle epic. The plot is based on Anthony 'Swoff' Swofford's real-life memoir of being a Marine during the first Gulf War. While Swofford did see action, this is more about his memories of boot camp training and the crushing numbness of waiting to be called to arms.

Despite American Beauty director Sam Mendes' best efforts, the movie does end up dragging a little. Thankfully, the movie is punctuated with the pitch-black comedy the troops use to keep themselves amused (and sane) and some top-notch acting.

WELCOME TO THE WAR

Gyllenhaal's great, though his role is usually reduced to that of an observer. The real standouts are Sarsgaard, his friend and fellow sniper, a driven Marine just hovering between maturity and madness, and Jamie Foxx as Sergeant Sykes, the tough-as-nails commander who wants to make sure his company makes it out alive – even if means shooting at them with live rounds during training. Mendes never allows the film to get bogged down in commentary – he sticks to the soldiers' points of view to make some cutting remarks about the treatment of troops and the validity of the war itself. Just don't expect a gung-ho action movie...

PSM2 VERDICT

MOVIE	GOOD+BAD	DVD
+ Gyllenhaal and co are excellent – Several dull patches press the yawn button	+ Some beautiful filmmaking. – Too long by a hell of a stretch...	+ Plenty of deleted scenes and good commentaries. – No real complaints on this score.

EXTRAS

The DVD is one for real fans of the film, loaded with deleted material and anchored by excellent chat tracks from the director, screenwriter and Swofford himself.

IT'S BETTER THAN...
PEARL HARBOR

IT'S WORSE THAN...
FULL METAL JACKET

Certainly thought-provoking, but such intelligent movie-making comes at a price – the loss of any real excitement whatsoever. Worth renting, though.

65

WALK THE LINE

STARRING
- Joaquin Phoenix
- Reese Witherspoon

DIRECTOR
- James Mangold

CERTIFICATE
- 12

PRICE
- £24.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

Or, The Film Where Joaquin Phoenix Does A Great Johnny Cash, But Reese Witherspoon Gets The Oscar. Which is a bit of a shame. That's certainly no criticism of Witherspoon, though – she's thoroughly excellent as June Carter Cash in this tale of the famed music star's early life. While Walk The Line does occasionally fall into some of the same traps as Ray – lots of similar points about drug use and the power of fame – it nevertheless transcends them to become a foot-tapping, heart-tugging story of a great man brought low by his own career. And thanks to Phoenix and Witherspoon putting in the rehearsal time, their musical performances are every bit as award-worthy as their acting. Cash lovers shouldn't miss this one, and even non-fans should enjoy it.

75

FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

STARRING
- Jim Carrey
- Tea Leoni

DIRECTOR
- Dean Parisot

CERTIFICATE
- 15

PRICE
- £19.99

RELEASE
- Out Now

Oh dear. Jim Carrey probably should have thought twice before committing to star in this remake of a 1977 comedy. As a sacked corporate ladder-climber who turns to robbery, Carrey does his best with what he's given (and you might have expect a better script given the re-writing by The 40-Year-Old Virgin's Judd Apatow), but instead this is nothing more than a load of mugging – and not just in the thieving sense. Carrey and Leoni have zero chemistry and make a terrible comedy pairing, while everyone else in the film just looks embarrassed. Still, it made some money at the box office, so chances are there are people who will buy it. Our advice? Save your money for something better. Like 200 packets of 10p pickled onion Space Raiders.

41

Films from another space and time

ANIMANIA

MICHEL: THE PILOT AND THE PRINCE

Michel is a boy who holds the secrets of life. Yay! But the evil Black Hammers are out to take the precious goods that belong to Michel's magical and mystical world. Boo! In flies Kim to the rescue in, erm, a vintage plane – and she's a few tricks of her own up her sleeve. Yay! This amazing girl is the only person in the world who can save Michel and [cough] the Fairies. Yes, it's for kids. Boo!

65

DIVERGENCE EVE: MISAKI CHRONICLES

In a bold move, Lieutenant Commander Lyar von Ertiana severs all links across the temporal barrier to prevent a takeover from the evil LeBlanc, who used to play Joey in Friends. But the dastardly Ghoul have already breached the wall holding them back and are pouring into the universe at an astonishing rate. A decent enough adventure.

78

AURA BATTLER DUNBINE

An epic adventure, Aura Battler Dunbine is a rich, beautifully-created world where magic and mecha work hand-in-hand. Aura Battler Dunbine was originally aired in the mid '80s and this is its first outing on DVD in the west. If you like watching robots hit each other, this'll blow your ass off. If you don't, well, it's better than the average edition of Robot Wars, at least.

72

ALSO RELEASED

JUST FRIENDS

Out Now Cert 12 Price £15.99

Ryan Reynolds has been threatening to turn into a major comedy star for years, but this throwaway laugh-fest isn't the ticket. OK-ish, but it never gels.

51

RUNNING SCARED

Out Now Cert 18 Price £19.99

Paul Walker attempts to throw off his pretty boy image with this dark, edgy thriller about a mob flunky, but it's tired, OTT and not worth your trouble.

30

OVER THERE: SEASON ONE

Out Now Cert 15 Price £39.99

If you liked Jarhead and crave more tales of soldier strife, check out this Iraq-focused US TV drama of army life. It's not perfect, but has some great moments.

66

MARCH OF THE PENGUINS

Out Now Cert E Price £17.99

The life of a penguin is a lot tougher than David Attenborough made it appear – but this is still an engrossing doc that chronicles the harsh lot of the birds.

80

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10 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT GOD OF WAR 2

It's not all PlayStation 3 these days. Feast your eyes on the sequel to the greatest action game on PS2. Your trusty console isn't going down without a fight...

Producing a sequel to the game that's the pinnacle in PS2 action titles isn't easy. Imagine the pressure of knowing that the benchmark you've previously set is amongst the heavens and any attempt to better it would require a Herculean effort. But not only have Sony America matched their award-winning *God Of War*, we reckon after our extended play, that they've even managed to better it. We've seen more of the game than anyone, and we can tell you one thing – you should be excited. It certainly seems that the developers are.

"We're hoping to make a fitting book-end to PS2 with this," says Tim Moss, Lead Programmer on *God of War 2*. "That's why the game isn't scheduled until 2007. We need to make sure that we apply adequate time to make sure it's just right." But it already looks astonishing.

We don't usually gush over games, but *God of War 2* demands it. Just look at the shots – they're amazing and the text [illegible] page – sent from Nathan to the office [illegible] first top secret play – says it all really. But it's not just the cosmetics that have us cooing like giant babies – there's also the promise of more boss battles than the original, which only had three (the hydra, flaming minotaur and Ares). Details of [illegible] battles are rarer than a snap of [illegible] swimsuit, but there will definitely [illegible] with Icarus (the winged idiot who [illegible] close to the sun and melted his flappers) [illegible] we're told that you will aquire his flying powers for use in the game. And each individual enemy you meet feels like a boss – especially Cerberus, whose heads you *actually have to wrestle from his neck*. This is a level of action that you never quite get used to.

What will become familiar however are the host of new weapons and magic in your armoury to combat these beasts, including a new ice blast which acts as a sort of frosty shotgun – repelling enemies through the air.

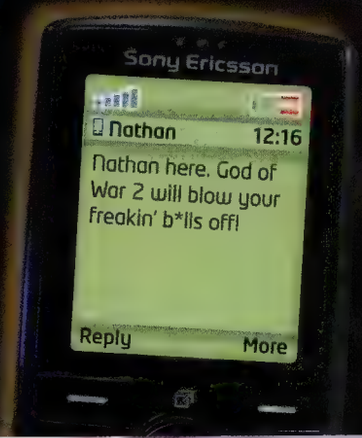
Thankfully, the super-hard Challenge of the Gods minigames return. Sort of. "There were tons of different challenges that we had to drop from the original game but they'll hopefully appear in the sequel in some form," says Tim. No specifics as yet, mind, but we're looking forward to finding out. And swearing profusely when we tray and fail.

As well as special guest star appearances from Hercules and Perseus (he killed Medusa) *God Of War* looks set to rock PS2 once more. And rock it so hard you might not even notice that PlayStation 3 under your TV.

THE STORY SO FAR

At the end of the original *God Of War*, Kratos smashed up Ares and became an immortal himself. At the beginning of *God Of War II*, the gods are well miffed that a mortal has been elevated to such a high position and trick the bald one into giving up his powers. Thus starts a bloody battle of revenge as Kratos travels to the edge of the world to get the Sisters of Fate to change his destiny – and his violent past. There hasn't been any talk of Kratos' brother showing up (there's a brief history movie alluding to his sibling at the end of the first game), but we'd bet the house on him making an appearance somewhere.

"NOT ONLY HAVE SONY MANAGED TO MATCH THE FIRST GOD OF WAR, THEY ACTUALLY SEEM TO HAVE BETTERED IT"



1 IT LOOKS AMAZING

Sod next-gen graphics, *God Of War II* shows us that PS2 can still pack a punch in the visuals department. When we laid eyes on the swirling clouds and lush landscapes that accompany the Pegasus sections Nathan was compelled to report back to base with the excited – if rather sweary – text you see over there. Honestly, from the way that the enemies move to the enormous swing across a waterfall, *God Of War II* will leave you blinking in awe.

10 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT GOD OF WAR 2

II RIDE A FLYING HORSE

The sight of Kratos jockeying around through skies atop of Pegasus is awesome, like *Ace Combat* but with a fire-breathing flapping jet. The swirling landscapes look lush – mountains and huge castles can be seen for miles as you leap from your steed onto Griffins, slash up their riders and hack off their massive wings.

III USE MAGIC SPELLS IN COMBOS

Taking a leaf from the *Devil May Cry* book of combos, Kratos can now fit his magic attacks into chained assaults, meaning you can switch on the fly. For example, you can lash an enemy up into the air with his Blades of Chaos and then reel off some electro-bolts as they're flying through the sky. This allows him to hit enemies while they're in a prone state and even kill them before they land.

MEDUSA GAZE

Beware. It's not just a scaly gorgon's gaze that can turn Kratos to stone. There are now even wall-mounted 'gaze turrets' scattered about the place. Yep, if Kratos comes across a medusa sculpture sticking out of a wall, a beam of light fixes on him, turning him into a statue immediately. However, he now has a Golden Fleece (acquired through the early stages) which deflects the cement-like effects eliminating the need for a quick roll or dodge to escape doom.

IV THE ENEMIES LOOK SUITABLY EVIL

Although Kratos will still be slaying villagers for life replenishment, there's plenty of evil beasts crawling around that you won't feel so bad about killing. There are old favourites like the harpies and Cyclops, but now there are giant gorgons, skeleton warriors and super aggressive Cerberus dogs to contend with. Throughout the game the ramped up selection of foes keep the action varied.

V CYCLOPS ARE RIDDEN BY SMALL BLOKES

Cyclops featured in the original game, but the plodding mono-eyed creature didn't really pose too many problems. This time around the lumbering beasts are ridden by *axe-wielding hobbits*, making them a much more mobile creature. You can drag these fellas off though, or just lash the monster until it drops to its knees.

10 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT GOD OF WAR 2

VI YOU CAN RIP MONSTERS TO BITS

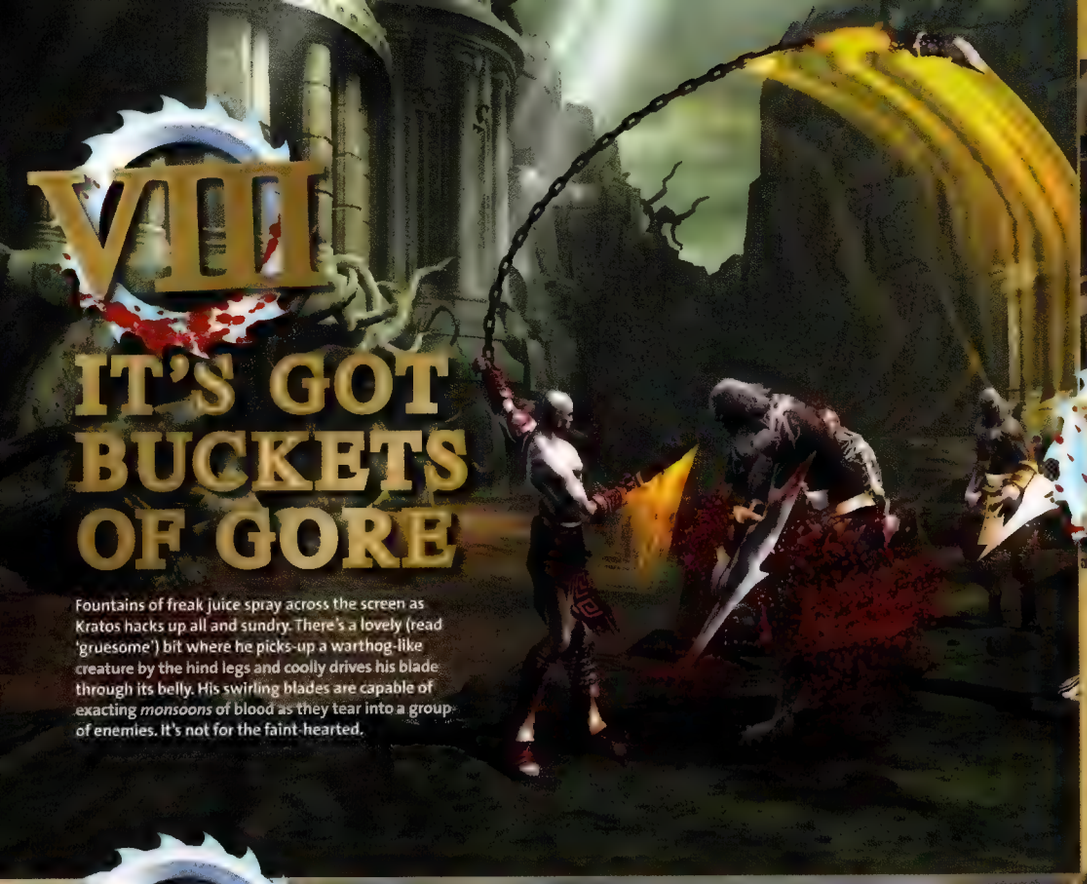
Kratos's penchant for pulling things apart has reached a new level of insanity. He doesn't care whether its eyes, wings or legs – he'll pull it out like a backstreet dentist. For example, the sight of him climbing a cyclops – plunging his blades into its chest for leverage – will make you recoil in disgust. But as Kratos slips his fingers behind the peeper and plucks it from its socket, you may actually barf.

VII YOU CAN FLY, ALMOST.

As well as the ability to use a grappling hook, Kratos now comes equipped with a set of Icarus Wings to help him leap across gaping ravines or reach high places. Although they don't last long, the wings allow you to glide through wind currents like a bird. Or, indeed, Icarus1.

PUZZLE ME DO

We know *God Of War II* will be packed with buckets of violence, but Sony haven't forgotten to give our brains a bit of a workout with some puzzles too. In one instance, Kratos has to get across a lava pit to nab the Golden Fleece – but he can't leap it. That'd be too easy. Instead, you have to jump onto a disc in the middle of the flaming river and pull/push a lever to move it within leaping range of safety. That done, ol' baldy boots two large statues to one end of a stone temple, which lifts the other end up like a see-saw. And with a mammoth display of strength, he topples the structure into the hot soup and creates a perfect bridge to the Fleece. And this is one of the earlier, simpler conundrums. Expect many more.



VIII IT'S GOT BUCKETS OF GORE

Fountains of freak juice spray across the screen as Kratos hacks up all and sundry. There's a lovely (read 'gruesome') bit where he picks-up a warthog-like creature by the hind legs and coolly drives his blade through its belly. His swirling blades are capable of exacting *monsoons* of blood as they tear into a group of enemies. It's not for the faint-hearted.

IX YOU SWING LIKE TARZAN

As well as running, climbing and jumping from A to B, Kratos now uses a grappling hook to get around. There are green-lit markers that let you know where the swing points are, and when he attaches to them he can swing round in a dizzyingly quick fashion, showing off with a few somersaults as he goes. We'd say it was just like flying, but as you've already read, you actually get to take flight for real anyway...

X KRATOS IS STRONG LIKE WEIGHT-LIFTING BEARS...

...but of course you already knew that. Although we still couldn't quite believe hit when he pushed a giant stone temple off its foundations during a button-mashing moment. And the way Kratos tears through multi-headed enemies like crépe paper demonstrate that his sheer brawn has reached truly God-like proportions.

PSM Presents...

The Truth

Every game PSM2 has ever reviewed in one fact-packed feature. It's the ultimate source of PS2 knowledge right at your fingertips.

TOP FIVE

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1. DRAGON QUEST
2. ROGUE GALAXY
3. KINGDOM HEARTS 2
4. DARK CHRONICLE
5. FINAL FANTASY X

DRIVING

1. BURNOUT REVENGE
2. GRAN TURISMO 4
3. COLIN MCRAE 04
4. MIDNIGHT CLUB 3
5. TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

EXTREME SPORTS

1. SSX3
2. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
3. SSX TRICKY
4. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
5. DOWNHILL DOMINATION

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
7 BLADES	11	72%	
7 SINS	63	58%	
13 (XIII)	42	87%	
24 – THE GAME	72	80%	
25 TO LIFE	73	35%	
50 CENT: BULLETPROOF	70	48%	
187: RIDE OR DIE	66	72%	
2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	22	71%	
ACE COMBAT 4: SHATTERED SKIES	17	80%	
ACE COMBAT 5	57	79%	
ACTIVISION ANTHOLOGY	36	40%	
AGE OF EMPIRES 2	15	76%	
AGGRESSIVE INLINE	24	83%	
AIRBLADE	16	77%	
ALIAS	47	79%	
ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER	15	65%	
ALIEN HOMINID	61	74%	
ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004	35	67%	
ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE	15	66%	
ALTERED BEAST	61	42%	
ANIMANIACS: THE GREAT EDGAR HUNT	64	62%	
APE ESCAPE 2	30	80%	
APE ESCAPE 3	73	71%	
AQUA AQUA	04	71%	
ARCTIC THUNDER	16	58%	
ARC: TWILIGHT OF SPIRITS	46	68%	
AREA 51	62	79%	
ARMORED CORE: NINE BREAKER	75	43%	
ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE	11	47%	
ARMY MEN RTS	24	56%	
ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2	09	40%	
ASTRO BOY	61	69%	
ATHENS 2004	51	51%	
A-TRAIN 6	49	60%	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	40	73%	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 3	68	74%	
ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2	33	68%	
ASTERIX AND OBELIX XXL	46	60%	
AUTO MODELLISTA	28	80%	
BAD BOYS 2	48	51%	
BACKYARD WRESTLING	42	45%	
BACKYARD WRESTLING 2	56	46%	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE	17	70%	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 2	04	82%	
BARBARIAN	44	66%	
THE BARD'S TALE	60	74%	
BASS STRIKE	18	64%	
BATMAN BEGINS	65	41%	
BATMAN VS. THE ARMY OF TSU	44	43%	
BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA	31	78%	
BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT	68	82%	
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	44	59%	
BEAT DOWN: FISTS OF VENGEANCE	67	54%	
BEN HUR: BLOOD OF BRAVES	34	42%	
BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL	42	82%	
BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS 2: TRUCK ME HARDER	65	52%	
BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET	64	60	
BLACK	72	89%	
BLACK HAWK DOWN	64	59%	
BLOOD OMEN 2	22	79%	
BLOODRAYNE	36	67%	
BLOODRAYNE 2	63	39%	
BLOODY ROAR 3	11	79%	
BLOOD WILL TELL	57	60%	
BLOWOUT	58	49%	
BMX XXX	30	58%	
BOMBERMAN HARDBALL	65	60%	
BOMBERMAN KART	41	51%	
BOUNCER, THE	11	66%	
BOXING CHAMPIONS	41	40%	
BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER	41	70%	
BRITNEY'S DANCE BEAT	24	58%	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: THE ROAD TO HILL 30	60	82%	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: EARNED IN BLOOD	68	84%	
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS	41	74%	
BURNOUT	15	88%	
BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT	28	**91%**	
Beautiful, emotional racing that you have to play to fully appreciate.			
BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	54	**93%**	
Smooth, fast and online too. You'd be a fool not to buy it.			
BURNOUT REVENGE	67	**93%**	
As astonishing as ever, and as pure a videogame as you'll ever see.			
BUZZ! THE MUSIC QUIZ	68	84%	
BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ	74	76%	
CABELA'S DANGEROUS HUNTS	53	57%	
CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR	56	87%	
CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE	70	86%	
CAPCOM FIGHTING JAM	58	53%	
CAPCOM VS SNK 2: MARK OF THE MILLENNIUM 2001	17	83%	
CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION	68	53%	
CART FURY	12	65%	
CASPER: SPIRIT DIMENSIONS	22	48%	

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS	72	64%	
CASTLEWEEN	30	45%	
CATWOMAN	52	30%	
CEL DAMAGE OVERDRIVE	36	50%	
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 5	63	62%	
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006	75	43%	
CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST	47	82%	
CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS	60	69%	
CHAOS LEGION	39	86%	
CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	66	31%	
CHOROQ	64	25%	
CHOPLIFTER: CRISIS` SHIELD	35	48%	
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	69	67%	
CIRCUS MAXIMUS: CHARIOT WARS	25	55%	
CLOCK TOWER 3	37	59%	
CLUB FOOTBALL	42	61%	
CLUB FOOTBALL 2	55	67%	
CODENAME KIDS NEXT DOOR: OP VIDEOGAME	71	33%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY '04	40	**92%**	
A defining moment for rally games. If you like rallying, get it.			
COLD FEAR	60	83%	
COLD WINTER	62	80%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	54	88%	
COLOSSEUM: ROAD TO FREEDOM	65	51%	
COMBAT ELITE: WW2 PARATROOPERS	52	77%	
COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE	24	79%	
COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE	73	68%	
CONFLICT: DESERT STORM	27	78%	
CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2	39	88%	
CONFLICT: VIETNAM	54	76%	
CONFLICT: GLOBAL STORM	67	78%	
CONFLICT ZONE	22	79%	
CONSPIRACY: WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION	65	23%	
CONSTANTINE	60	60%	
CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER	32	52%	
CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX	17	66%	
CRASH 'N BURN	57	46%	
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING	70	74%	
CRASH TWINSANITY	55	49%	
CRAZY FROG RACER	71	37%	
CRAZY TAXI	10	80%	
CRICKET 2005	64	79%	
CRIME LIFE	70	30%	
CRIMSON SEA 2	53	70%	
CRISIS ZONE	53	59%	
CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON	44	35%	
CY GIRLS	50	74%	
DAKAR 2	34	50%	
DANCE UK	42	67%	
DANCING STAGE FUSION	58	67%	
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX	36	85%	
DARK ANGEL	34	45%	
DARK CHRONICLE	37	**90%**	
Debatably better than *Final Fantasy X*...			
DARK CLOUD	11	81%	
DARK SUMMIT	21	56%	
DARKWATCH	67	75%	

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2	14	76%	
DEAD OR ALIVE 2	05	83%	
DEAD TO RIGHTS	38	70%	
DEAD TO RIGHTS 2	65	41%	
DEATH BY DEGREES	60	42%	
DEFENDER	31	76%	
DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY	54	86%	
DEF JAM VENDETTA	36	75%	
DESTROY ALL HUMANS	64	83%	
DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS	45	42%	
DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY	22	88%	
DEVIL KINGS	69	64%	
DEVIL MAY CRY	15	**90%**	
Blindingly gorgeous and cracking to play. A brilliant advert for PS2.			
DEVIL MAY CRY 2	33	72%	
DEVIL MAY CRY 3	60	89%	
DIE HARD VENDETTA	38	54%	
DINO STALKER	26	58%	
DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS	49	86%	
DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE	40	78%	
DJ: DECKS & FX	53	74%	
DONALD DUCK PK	30	64%	
DOWNFORCE	23	64%	
DOT HACK INFECTION: PART ONE	47	58%	
DOWNHILL DOMINATION	46	80%	
DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI	30	60%	
DRAGON BALL Z: TENKAICHI	68	74%	
DRAKENGARD	50	75%	
DRAKENGARD 2	73	54%	
DRAGON QUEST	74	**90%**	
The RPG series finally makes its way to PS2, and it's wonderful.			
DRAGON RAGE	23	43%	
DRAKAN: THE ANCIENTS' GATES	20	75%	
DRIVEN	17	46%	
DRIVEN TO DESTRUCTION	55	65%	
DRIV3R	50	**90%**	
Superb in Free Ride, less so in Story Mode, but balls-out fun			
DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES	73	79%	
DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S	01	57%	
DR MUTO	33	59%	
DROME RACERS	31	50%	
DYNASTY TACTICS 2	44	69%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 3: XTREME LEGENDS	34	69%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4	37	80%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS	46	70%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 5	63	53%	
DYNASTY WARRIORS 5: XTREME LEGENDS	74	45%	
ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE	18	52%	
EGGO MANIA	27	40%	
EJAY CLUBWORLD	26	84%	
ENDGAME	25	49%	
ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	49	62%	
ENTER THE MATRIX	37	81%	
ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING	62	77%	
EOE: EVE OF EXTINCTION	22	71%	
EPHEMERAL FANTASIA	12	80%	
ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND	12	82%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79% | SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89% | GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD	04	63%	
ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS	20	55%	
ESPN NBA 2NIGHT 2002	24	72%	
ESPN NFL 2K5	59	83%	
ESPN NHL 2K5	59	71%	
ESPN NHL HOCKEY	44	78%	
ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING	15	62%	
ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2	20	69%	
EVERBLUE 2	34	56%	
EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES	41	70%	
EVERYBODY'S GOLF	67	87%	
EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK	37	68%	
EVIL DEAD REGENERATION	70	47%	
EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING	33	54%	
EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING	33	43%	
EXTERMINATION	09	78%	
EYE TOY: ANTIGRAV	63	66%	
EYETOY: PLAY 2	56	75%	
EYETOY: PLAY 3	69	70%	
F1 2005	64	83%	
F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP	07	66%	
FAHRENHEIT	66	87%	
FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL	48	46%	
FANTASTIC 4	65	65%	
FANTAVISION	01	85%	
FATAL FRAME 3: THE TORMENTED	71	79%	
FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, THE	30	70%	
FERRARI F355 CHALLENGE	27	67%	
FIFA 2005	54	79%	
FIFA 06	67	71%	
FIFA STREET	60	63%	
FIFA STREET 2	73	71%	
FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006	75	80%	
FIGHT CLUB	59	19%	
FIGHT NIGHT 2004	48	88%	
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2	61	89%	
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3	73	87%	
FINAL FANTASY VII: DIRGE OF CERBERUS	75	36%	
FINAL FANTASY X	23	91%	
The most life-swallowing RPG of them all.			
FINAL FANTASY 10-2	44	83%	
FINAL FANTASY XI (IMPORT)	49	85%	
FINAL FANTASY XII	75	90%	
Yet more RPG goodness. You must play this.			
FINAL FIGHT: STREETWISE	74	40%	
FINDING NEMO	41	71%	
FIREBLADE	24	68%	
FIREFIGHTER FD18	49	76%	
FLAT OUT	56	77%	
FLIPNIC	45	76%	
FLOW: URBAN DANCE UPRISING	72	69%	
FORBIDDEN SIREN	44	80%	
FORD RACING 3	56	34%	
FORD STREET RACING	73	68%	
FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE	54	74%	
FORMULA ONE 2004	52	65%	
FREAK OUT	13	79%	
FREAKY FLYERS	42	77%	
FREEDOM FIGHTERS	40	92%	
An utterly compelling squad-based shooter.			
FREEKSTYLE	25	59%	
FREESTYLE METAL X	40	74%	
FREQUENCY	23	64%	
FRIENDS: THE ONE WITH ALL THE TRIVIA	73	44%	
FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	61	85%	
FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS	73	85%	
FUR FIGHTERS	10	86%	
FUTURAMA	37	75%	
FUTURE TACTICS	57	64%	
G1 JOCKEY 3	34	43%	
G1 JOCKEY 4	74	65%	
GALERIANS: ASH	34	50%	
GALLOP RACER 2	60	34%	
GAMETRAK: DARK WIND	54	55%	
GAMETRAK: REAL WORLD GOLF	68	74%	
GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS	71	40%	
GENJI	66	84%	
GET ON DA MIC	56	49%	
GETAWAY, THE	31	78%	
GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY, THE	56	71%	
GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX	62	47%	
GHOST RECON	30	65%	
GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM	47	75%	
GHOST RECON 2	57	63%	
GHOST RECON: ADVANCED WARFIGHTER	75	64%	
GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO	17	80%	
GIFT	12	51%	
GITAROO MAN	22	79%	
GLADIUS	42	52%	
THE GODFATHER	73	75%	
GOD OF WAR	62	92%	
God Of War grabs you by the balls and doesn't let go.			
GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE	47	65%	
GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT	56	58%	
GRADIUS V	51	83%	
GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE	31	85%	
GRAND THEFT AUTO 3	16	92%	
Its scope and and tiny touches are some of the most impressive yet.			
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	29	97%	
The music, the styling, the freedom ... (almost) nothing beats it.			
GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	56	99%	
Simply the best game on PS2. Mind-boggling.			
GRAND TOUR RACING GT-R 400	51	53%	
GRAN TURISMO 3	13	93%	
The most complete racing game yet.			
GRAN TURISMO 4	59	92%	
Still the most serious racing sim on PS2.			
GRAN TURISMO 4: PROLOGUE	50	79%	
GRAVITY GAMES BIKE: STREET, VERT, DIRT	28	48%	
GREAT ESCAPE, THE	39	73%	
GREGORY HORROR SHOW	42	70%	
GROOVE RIDER	45	52%	
G-SURFERS	16	49%	
GUILTY GEAR X2	35	84%	
GUILTY GEAR ISUKA	65	79%	
GUMBALL 3000	29	73%	

TOP FIVE

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

1. TIMESPLITTERS 2
2. HALF-LIFE
3. BLACK
4. DEUS EX
5. CALL OF DUTY 2

ACTION GAMES

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS
2. RESIDENT EVIL 4
3. GOD OF WAR
4. ONIMUSHA 3
5. DEVIL MAY CRY 3

PLATFORMERS

1. RATCHET AND CLANK 3
2. JAK 2: RENEGADE
3. PSYCHONAUTS
4. SLY 3
5. BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

ALL-TIME BEST

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS
2. RESIDENT EVIL 4
3. METAL GEAR SOLID 3
4. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5
5. TIMESPLITTERS 2

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
GUITAR HERO	74	90%	
The most fun possible while making a complete show of yourself.			
GUN	69	88%	
GUNBIRD: SPECIAL EDITION	62	39%	
GUNDAM: FEDERATION VS ZEON	29	39%	
GUNFIGHTER 2: REVENGE OF JESSE JAMES	35	40%	
GUNGRAVE OD	64	71%	
GUN GRIFFON BLAZE	07	70%	
HALF-LIFE	16	90%	
A port of one of the best PC games ever made. This is a must-buy.			
HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS	31	65%	
HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE	70	51%	
HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN	51	76%	
HARRY POTTER: THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE	44	55%	
HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE	71	85%	
HAUNTING GROUND	62	78%	
HAUNTED MANSION, THE	46	70%	
HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING	29	81%	
HEADHUNTER	19	81%	
HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	53	53%	
HELLO KITTY: ROLLER RESCUE	71	59%	
HERDY GERDY	21	69%	
HEROES OF THE PACIFIC	67	79%	
HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL	24	71%	
HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN	28	89%	
HITMAN: CONTRACTS	49	90%	
A game that promotes experimentation and plays brilliantly.			
HOTWHEELS VELOCITY X MAXIMUM JUSTICE	31	51%	
HULK, THE	38	70%	
HUNTER WAYWARD: THE RECKONING	41	30%	
HYPER STREET FIGHTER II: 15TH ANNIVERSARY EDT.	46	89%	
ICE AGE 2	74	68%	
ICO	71	93%	
Now it's re-released, you *must* play this ultra-emotional epic.			
INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION	66	88%	
INCREDIBLES, THE	57	72%	
INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER	70	50%	
INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB	39	80%	
INDYCAR SERIES 2005	53	63%	
I-NINJA	45	85%	
INTERNATIONAL CUE CLUB	24	56%	
ISLAND EXTREME STUNTS	33	65%	
ISS3	34	78%	
ITALIAN JOB: LA HEIST, THE	40	51%	
JACKED	72	34%	
JADE COCOON 2	22	70%	
JAK & DAXTER	18	85%	
JAK 2: RENEGADE	40	93%	
Vast, well-built and bursting with distractions.			
JAK 3	56	88%	
JAK X	68	84%	
JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING	46	77%	
JAMES BOND 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE	69	69%	
JAMES BOND 007 IN AGENT UNDER FIRE	17	88%	
JAMES BOND 007 IN... NIGHTFIRE	30	78%	
JET SKI RIDERS	18	38%	
JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX	20	38%	
JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH	40	83%	
JUICED	62	68%	
JUNGLE BOOK GROOVE PARTY	10	50%	
JURASSIC PARK: OPERATION GENESIS	34	61%	
KAIDO RACER	71	53%	
KATAMARI DAMASHII	49	83%	
KARAOKE STAGE	49	85%	
KARAOKE STAGE 2	74	73%	
KENGO	09	60%	
KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER	28	75%	
KESSEN II	20	66%	
KESSEN III	61	82%	
KILL.SWITCH	44	78%	
KILLER7	64	83%	
KILLZONE	55	88%	
KING ARTHUR	57	37%	
KINGDOM HEARTS 2	73	90%	
Hang out with Donald, Pluto and the Disney mob – amazing.			
KING OF FIGHTERS 2002	64	58%	
KING OF FIGHTERS: MAXIMUM IMPACT	61	79%	
KING OF ROUTE 66	41	44%	
KINGDOM HEARTS	29	88%	
KING KONG	69	72%	
KLONOA 2	10	73%	
KNIGHT RIDER 2	57	21%	
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001	07	79%	
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002	21	83%	
KURI KURI MIX	10	78%	
KYA: DARK LINEAGE	45	73%	
LA PUCELLE TACTICS	52	80%	
LA RUSH	67	75%	
LEGEND OF KAY	59	69%	
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2	33	68%	
LEGION: LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR	27	70%	
LEGO STAR WARS	62	78%	
LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE	54	80%	
LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS	58	55%	
LE MANS 24 HOURS	12	73%	
LETHAL SKIES	27	63%	
LETHAL SKIES 2	48	68%	
LE TOUR DE FRANCE	23	75%	
LE TOUR DE FRANCE: CENTENARY EDITION	38	71%	
LMA MANAGER 2005	55	80%	
LMA MANAGER 2006	68	85%	
LONDON RACER: WORLD CHALLENGE	40	59%	
LOONY TUNES SPACE RACE	19	65%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING	43	84%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE	55	53%	
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS	29	76%	
LOTUS CHALLENGE	16	60%	
MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER	38	79%	
MADAGASCAR	65	56%	
MADDEN NFL 2005	54	82%	
MADDEN NFL 2006	69	85%	
MAD MAESTROS	22	70%	
MAFIA	46	71%	
MAGNA CARTA	74	64%	
MAKAI KINGDOM	70	83%	
MALICE	51	60%	

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
MANHUNT	43	91%	
Chilling, vicious and utterly remarkable Rockstar goodness.			
MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP	72	88%	
MARK OF KRI, THE	33	74%	
MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS	68	41%	
MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	29	84%	
MASHED: FULLY LOADED	62	70%	
MASTER RALLY	24	55%	
MATRIX: PATH OF NEO	69	81%	
MAXIMO	20	84%	
MAXIMO VS THE ARMY OF ZIN	42	81%	
MAX PAYNE	19	82%	
MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE	45	65%	
MDK2 ARMAGEDDON	09	76%	
MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT	64	52%	
MEGA MAN X8	59	45%	
MEN IN BLACK 2: ALIEN ESCAPE	26	42%	
MERCENARIES	58	88%	
METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM	41	87%	
METAL GEAR SOLID 2	17	96%	
Near perfectly balanced and worth every bit of the hype			
METAL GEAR SOLID 3	57	97%	
We didn't think it could get better. We were wrong. A masterpiece.			
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE	33	78%	
METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE	73	90%	
Metal Gear 3, but online and entirely in Japanese. Brilliant.			
METAL SLUG 3	55	79%	
METAL SLUG 5	72	54%	
MIAMI VICE	58	13%	
MICRO MACHINES	30	59%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 2	37	80%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	61	91%	
The street racing genre at its peak, *Dub Edition* is sex on wheels.			
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX	74	80%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES	45	48%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 2	55	71%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 3	67	12%	
MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING	23	61%	
MINI DESKTOP RACING	71	43%	
MINORITY REPORT	31	60%	
MONKEY MANIA	60	69%	
MONSTER HUNTER	62	70%	
MONSTERS, INC	19	41%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE	33	85%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION	54	85%	
MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS	67	82%	
MOTO GP3	35	74%	
MOTO GP4	63	78%	
MOTOR MAYHEM	15	63%	
MR GOLF	34	56%	
MR MOSKEETO	22	52%	
MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2	10	90%	
A musical pandora's box, offering professional results to everyone.			
MTX MOTOTRAX	49	79%	
MUMMY RETURNS, THE	17	46%	
MUSIC 3000	35	81%	
MX 2002	14	78%	
MX RIDER	15	62%	
MX SUPERFLY	27	72%	
MX UNLEASHED	48	75%	
MX VS. ATV: UNLEASHED	61	78%	
MYSTIC HEROES	34	67%	
NAMCO MUSEUM 50TH ANNIVERSARY	73	51%	
NANO BREAKER	59	59%	
NARC	62	45%	
NBA 2K3	35	70%	
NBA BALLERS	53	82%	
NBA JAM	42	77%	
NBA LIVE 2004	42	84%	

NBA STREET VOLUME 2	35	85%	
NBA STREET VOLUME 3	60	87%	
NEED FOR SPEED 2	55	87%	
NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED	69	88%	
NEXT GENERATION TENNIS 2003	38	55%	
NFL STREET	46	64%	
NFL STREET 2	61	55%	
NHL HITZ 2003	28	80%	
NHL HITZ: PRO	42	80%	
THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE XMAS: OOGIE'S REVENGE	67	61%	
NIGHTSHADE	46	73%	
NINJA ASSAULT	27	71%	
NINJABREAD MAN	69	32%	
NO ONE LIVES FOREVER	21	71%	
NY RACE	17	40%	
OBSCURE	54	80%	
ONI	07	62%	
ONIMUSHA 2	27	89%	
ONIMUSHA 3	50	92%	
Provocative, exquisite gameplay backed up by plush visuals.			
ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS	45	75%	
ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS	73	79%	
OPERATION WINBACK	08	68%	
OUTLAW GOLF 2	57	78%	
OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL REMIXED	68	50%	
OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST	73	89%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79%

SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89%

GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

The Truth

SCANDALOUS GOSSIP.T. ZERO BULLSHIT

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
PAC-MAN WORLD 2	33	75%	
PAC-MAN WORLD 3	72	63%	
PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2	16	75%	
PARIS-DAKAR RALLY	15	60%	
PERFECT ACE PRO TENNIS	38	38%	
PETER PAN: LEGEND OF NEVERLAND	20	50%	
PILOT DOWN: BEHIND ENEMY LINES	65	53%	
PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION	47	71%	
PIRATES: LEGEND OF BLACK KAT	21	38%	
THE PLAN	72	48%	
PLAYBOY: THE MANSION	60	51%	
POLICE 24/7	19	49%	
POOL MASTER	05	45%	
POOL PARADISE	48	72%	
POOL SHARK 2	7	56%	
PORTAL RUNNER	16	55%	
PREDATOR: CONCRETE JUNGLE	63	58%	
PREMIER MANAGER	31	80%	
PREMIER MANAGER 2004/2005	57	63%	
PRIDE FC	34	75%	
PRIMAL	33	79%	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN	56	87%	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES	70	77%	
PRISONER OF WAR	24	73%	
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	55	94%	
Incredible customisation and sublime control. Vital.			
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	68	93%	
The best *Pro Evo* yet – the most satisfying football game ever.			
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER MANAGEMENT	74	65%	
PROJECT EDEN	14	86%	
PROJECT: SNOWBLIND	59	83%	
PROJECT ZERO 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY	45	82%	
PRO RALLY 2002	22	68%	
PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY	52	86%	
PSYCHONAUTS	65	90%	
Explore the mental landscapes of certified nutters. Superb.			
PTO IV	48	41%	
PUNISHER, THE	60	82%	
PUYO POP FEVER	46	85%	
QUAKE 3 REVOLUTION	08	85%	
RAINBOW SIX 3	47	77%	
RAINBOW SIX 4: LOCKDOWN	67	68%	
RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	24	56%	
RAMPAGE: TOTAL DESTRUCION	74	47%	
RAPALA PRO FISHING	65	40%	
RATCHET & CLANK	29	91%	
A labour of love on every crafted level. Great stuff.			
RATCHET & CLANK 2	42	85%	
RATCHET & CLANK 3	56	92%	
PS2 platforming perfection. It gets no better than this. A must.			
RATCHET GLADIATOR	69	85%	
RAYMAN	18	48%	
RAYMAN REVOLUTION	05	68%	
RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC	34	80%	
RC REVENGE PRO	04	56%	
READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2	04	82%	
RED CARD	23	80%	
RED DEAD REVOLVER	49	86%	
RED FACTION	11	88%	
RED FACTION 2	29	85%	
RED NINJA: END OF HONOUR	61	73%	
REIGN OF FIRE	30	71%	
RESIDENT EVIL 4	68	97%	
Beautiful, visceral, horrifying and absolutely essential. Get it.			
RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X	13	80%	
RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM	37	68%	
RESIDENT EVIL SURVIVOR 2 CODE: VERONICA	20	41%	
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK	45	86%	
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK FILE 2	67	68%	
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN OP. RESURRECTION	38	80%	
REZ	18	66%	
RHYTHMIC STAR	75	37%	
RIBBIT KING	55	22%	
RICHARD BURNS RALLY	51	66%	
RIDGE RACER 5	01	72%	
RIDING SPIRITS	27	46%	
RIDING SPIRITS 2	50	48%	
RING OF RED	10	74%	
RISE TO HONOUR	47	71%	
ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY	30	69%	
ROBOT WARS: ARENAS OF DESTRUCTION	16	63%	
ROADKILL	44	72%	
ROCKY	29	84%	
ROCKY LEGENDS	55	66%	
ROGUE GALAXY	73	91%	
Space piracy is the theme in yet another cracking RPG.			
ROGUE TROOPER	58	84%	
ROLLERCOASTER WORLD	47	50%	
ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGS VIII	48	70%	
R: RACER EVOLUTION	45	37%	
RTX RED ROCK	38	55%	
RUGBY 2004	40	81%	
RUGBY 2005	63	61%	
RUGBY CHALLENGE 2006	70	64%	
RULE OF ROSE	75	58%	
RUMBLE RACING	10	76%	
RUMBLE ROSES	59	69%	
RUNE: VIKING WARLORD	13	56%	
RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE	33	78%	
RYU GA GOTOKU	71	80%	
SAMURAI JACK: THE SHADOW OF AKU	51	59%	
SAMURAI WARRIORS	52	80%	
SAMURAI WARRIORS: XTREME LEGENDS	59	66%	
SAMURAI WESTERN	65	79%	
SAVAGE SKIES	34	67%	
S.C.A.R. – SQUADRA CORSE ALFA ROMEO	63	50%	
SCOOBY DOO: MYSTERY MAYHEM	49	51%	
SCRABBLE 2003 EDITION	40	64%	
SECOND SIGHT	53	90%	
Beautiful design and a truly novel take on the stealth genre.			
SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY	45	76%	

NATHAN'S TOP FIVE

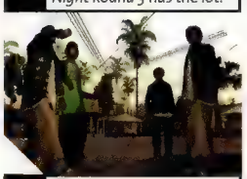
PRO EVO 5 REMAINS LIKE SOME SORT OF FOOTBALL DRUG.

1 PRO EVO 5

In over *WE10* 'cos it's in English. And nothing betters the feeling you get when you hit a 30 yard pile-driver into the net.

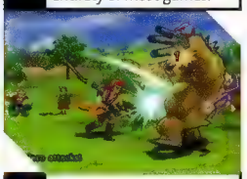
2 FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

The finest fighter on PS2. Fact. Whether it's epic bouts that go the distance or a first round KO, *Fight Night Round 3* has the lot.



3 GTA: SAN ANDREAS

It pushes the realms of possibility to a new level. There are more things to do in one city than in the entirety of most games.



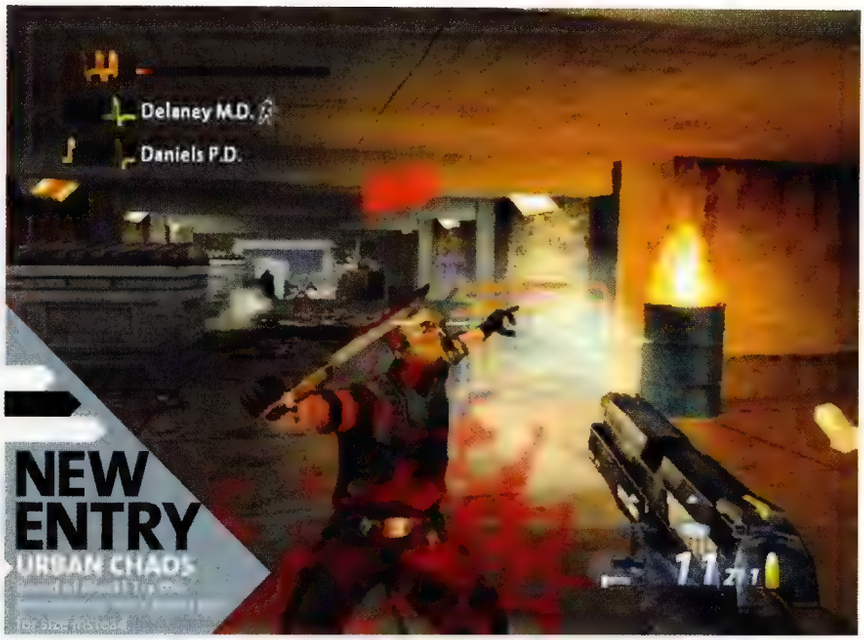
4 DRAGON QUEST

Christ. How did an RPG get in here? By providing hours of gentle slime-slaying action which my other half is content to be involved in.

5 GUITAR HERO

True story: *GH* inspired me to learn *actual* guitar. As you rock out, you really end up feeling like you're an axe god.

GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
SEEK & DESTROY	39	69%	
SEGA BASS FISHING DUEL	33	55%	
SEGA CLASSICS COLLECTION	72	41%	
SEGA RALLY 2006	72	68%	
SEGA SUPERSTARS	56	80%	
SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER	49	74%	
SHADOW HEARTS: COVENANT	60	84%	
SHADOW HEARTS: FROM THE NEW WORLD	75	79%	
SHADOW MAN: 2ECOND COMING	20	68%	
SHADOW OF MEMORIES	06	80%	
SHADOW OF ROME	58	85%	
SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS	69	91%	
Stab big monsters in one of PS2's most astonishing feats.			
SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG	70	60%	
SHARK TALE	55	29%	
SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	51	71%	
SHIN MEGAMI TENSAI: LUCIFER'S CALL	64	85%	
SHINOBI	35	75%	
SHOX	28	61%	
SHREK 2	51	78%	
SHREK SUPER SLAM	70	70%	
SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	50	72%	
SILENT HILL 2	15	88%	
SILENT HILL 3	36	87%	
SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	52	74%	
THE SILENT HILL COLLECTION	75	89%	
SILENT SCOPE 3	31	54%	
SILPHEED	03	51%	
SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN	42	77%	
SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE, THE	16	76%	
THE SIMS	31	85%	
THE SIMS 2	69	75%	
THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT	44	79%	
SINGSTAR	49	90%	
For people who don't like games. And for people who love games.			
SINGSTAR 80'S	68	81%	
SINGSTAR POPWORLD	62	70%	
SINGSTAR ROCKS	74	80%	
SKY ODYSSEY	08	79%	
SLAM TENNIS	25	77%	
SLY RACCOON	31	80%	
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES	55	81%	
SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES	69	87%	
SMASH CARS	39	54%	
SMASH COURT TENNIS: PRO TOURNAMENT 2	50	85%	
SMUGGLER'S RUN	03	75%	
SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORY	17	77%	
SNIPER ELITE	67	80%	
SNK VS CAPCOM: SVC CHAOS	59	78%	
SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS	30	82%	
SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS	44	90%	
Immersive and dramatic – worth hooking up to broadband for.			
SOCOM 3: US NAVY SEALS	74	78%	
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE: GOLD EDITION	23	64%	
SONIC HEROES	46	66%	
SONIC RIDERS	74	59%	
SOUL CALIBUR 2	40	93%	
The very best fighter money can buy.			
SOUL CALIBUR III	69	89%	
SONIC MEGA COLLECTION PLUS	58	69%	
SONIC GEMS	68	55%	
SOUL REAVER 2	17	78%	
SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR	67	88%	
SPAWN ARMAGEDDON	47	69%	
SPEED KINGS	37	55%	
SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY	46	64%	
SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE	24	70%	
SPIDER-MAN 2	51	92%	
Best movie license ever. Best superhero game ever. Best *GTA* clone.			
SPINDRIVE PING PONG	62	32%	
SPLASHDOWN	16	75%	
SPLASHDOWN 2: RIDERS GONE WILD	40	75%	
SPLINTER CELL	34	91%	
The ultimate 'boys with toys' action adventure that's full of surprises.			
SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY	61	88%	
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	51	88%	
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE, THE	59	43%	
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: MOVIN' WITH FRIENDS	58	29%	



GAME NAME ISSUE	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
SPY FICTION	54	75%	
SPY HUNTER 2	46	67%	
SPYTOY	67	65%	
SPY VS. SPY	61	32%	
SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY	30	68%	
SSX ON TOUR	68	83%	
SSX TRICKY	16	95%	
Edgy, funky, cool – compulsive gameplay and pure fun.			
SSX3	41	94%	
Makes you feel good about life. Responsive and thrilling.			
STAR OCEAN 3	55	85%	
STARSKY & HUTCH	38	77%	
STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE	23	75%	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT	54	77%	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT 2	69	80%	
STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER	31	62%	
STAR WARS: EPISODE III REVENGE OF THE SITH	63	48%	
STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER	22	80%	
STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER	09	85%	
STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS	33	69%	
STATE OF EMERGENCY	20	75%	
STATE OF EMERGENCY 2	75	30%	
STOLEN	62	38%	
STREET FIGHTER EX3	05	79%	
STREET RACING SYNDICATE	62	62%	
STUNT GP	16	38%	
STUNTMAN	26	74%	
SUFFERING, THE	48	86%	
SUFFERING 2: TIES THAT BIND	67	73%	
SUIKODEN 3	39	66%	
SUIKODEN IV	63	65%	
SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL	39	56%	
SUMMONER	07	70%	
SUMMONER 2	29	73%	
SUM OF ALL FEARS, THE	29	57%	
SUPER BUST-A-MOVE	04	78%	
SUPERFARM	42	60%	
SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS	29	48%	
SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE	66	84%	
SWAT GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM	42	82%	
SWING AWAY GOLF	05	70%	
SX SUPERSTAR	38	53%	
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN	50	75%	
TAITO LEGENDS	68	45%	
TAITO LEGENDS 2	73	40%	
TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS	64	72%	
TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE	74	66%	
TAZ: WANTED	28	70%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	47	56%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2: BATTLE NEXUS	58	23%	
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3	75	48%	
TEKKEN 4	27	90%	
Way more of everything than the stopgap *Tournament* title. Brilliant.			
TEKKEN 5	61	91%	
And even better again – the ultimate *Tekken*.			
TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	04	87%	
TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS	63	68%	
TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN	34	70%	
TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE	28	49%	
TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	55	66%	
TEST DRIVE: OFFROAD WIDE OPEN	16	44%	
THEME PARK WORLD	05	68%	
THING, THE	27	83%	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2004	47	75%	
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2005	56	68%	
THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX	14	70%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	54	82%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006	67	78%	
TIME CRISIS 2	16	78%	
TIMESPLITTERS 2	28	95%	
Stunning multi-player PLUS a massive single-player mode.			
TIMESPLITTERS 3: FUTURE PERFECT	59	90%	
Now rather more soulless than before. Still superb, though.			
TOCA RACE DRIVER	26	82%	
TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	54	90%	
Tracks, cars and – vitally – racing are all super.			
TOCA RACE DRIVER 3	72	90%	
Just as superb as the last one. Vital for petrolheads.			

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79%

SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89%

GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

TOP FIVE

PSP GAMES

1. GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES
2. VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR
3. LUMINES
4. BURNOUT LEGENDS
5. OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

GUITAR HERO 2 SONG HOPES

1. BACK IN BLACK
2. KILLING IN THE NAME OF...
3. WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE
4. MR BRIGHTSIDE
5. JUICEBOX

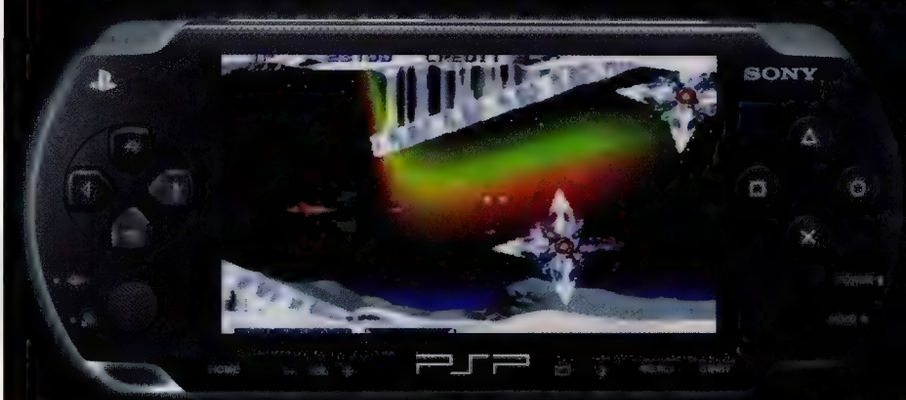
KIDS' TV GAMES

1. TAZ: WANTED
2. ANIMANIACS
3. LOONY TUNES: SPACE RACE
4. HELLO KITTY ROLLER RESCUE
5. SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

FIVES

1. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5
2. TEKKEN 5
3. ACE COMBAT 5
4. METAL SLUG 5
5. DYNASTY WARRIORS 5

GAME NAME	ISSUE	SCORE	AWARD
TOKYO ROAD RACE	36	45%	
TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS	38	58%	
TOMB RAIDER LEGEND	74	81%	
TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND	68	86%	
TONY HAWKS UNDERGROUND 2	55	89%	
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	**30**	**94%**	
Lacks the impact of *THPS3*, but we suggest you get this version first.			
TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL	04	62%	
TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONE	16	67%	
TOP SPIN	68	61%	
TORINO '06: WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES	71	57%	
TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005	56	56%	
TOTAL IMMERSION RACING	31	74%	
TOTAL OVERDOSE	**67**	**90%**	
GTA in Mexico, basically, but with stacks of class. Terrific.			
TOURIST TROPHY	75	68%	
TRANSFORMERS	49	84%	
TRAPT	73	39%	
TREASURE PLANET	29	75%	
TRIBES: AERIAL ASSAULT	37	74%	
TRUE CRIME	43	74%	
TRUE CRIME 2: NEW YORK CITY	70	71%	
TUROK EVOLUTION	27	71%	
TT SUPERBIKES	63	41%	
TWISTED METAL: BLACK	13	80%	
TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 2	55	38%	
U MOVE SUPER SPORTS	57	63%	
UEFA CHALLENGE	12	56%	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004-2005	59	62%	
UEFA EURO 2004	49	70%	
UFC: SUDDEN IMPACT	51	70%	
UFC: THROWDOWN	27	75%	
ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN	68	79%	
UNDER THE SKIN	58	70%	
UNLIMITED SAGA	42	41%	
UNREAL TOURNAMENT	07	82%	
URBAN CHAOS	75	85%	
URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	45	72%	
URBAN REIGN	71	78%	
URBZ – SIMS IN THE CITY, THE	56	50%	
USA RACER	36	37%	
VAMPIRE NIGHTS	21	59%	
VAN HELSING	49	67%	
VIB RIPPLE	52	58%	
VICTORIOUS BOXERS	14	80%	
VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE	54	71%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE	54	88%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE 2	58	85%	
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION	36	87%	
VIRTUAL-ON: MARZ	39	56%	
VIRTUA TENNIS 2	30	88%	
V-RALLY 3	24	81%	
WACKY RACES	11	63%	
WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED: FT. SHAUN MURRAY	37	65%	
WALLACE AND GROMIT IN PROJECT ZOO	41	69%	
WALLACE AND GROMIT: CURSE O/T WERE-RABBIT	68	72%	
THE WARRIORS	68	87%	
WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR	40	65%	
WAR OF THE MONSTERS	34	69%	
WAY OF THE SAMURAI	50	80%	
WDL THUNDER TANKS	06	69%	
WE LOVE KATAMARI	69	82%	
WHIPLASH	46	72%	
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE 2	17	53%	
WILD ARMS 3	33	71%	
WILD WILD RACING	03	71%	
WINNING ELEVEN 9	**66**	**91%**	
As close to real football as you'll ever see on your PS2.			
WIPEOUT FUSION	19	73%	
WITHOUT WARNING	68	49%	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2004	51	80%	
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY	48	55%	
WORLD WAR ZERO: IRONSTORM	48	77%	
WORMS 3D	42	80%	
WORMS 4: MAYHEM	64	47%	
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 4	55	87%	
WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2005	61	68%	
WRC: RALLY EVOLVED	68	89%	
WRECKLESS: THE YAKUZA MISSIONS	30	38%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW	56	85%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW 2006	69	83%	
WWF SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT	16	80%	
WORLD POKER TOUR	70	43%	
THE X-FACTOR SING	69	18%	
XGRA: EXTREME G	40	75%	
X-MEN LEGENDS 2: RISE OF APOCALYPSE	68	71%	
X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION	31	67%	
X-MEN: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	36	75%	
X SQUAD	06	59%	
YETISPORTS ARCTIC ADVENTURES	65	44%	
YU-GI-OH!: DUELLISTS OF THE ROSES	41	62%	
ZATHURA	73	26%	
ZOE 2: THE 2ND RUNNER	35	79%	



PSP REVIEWS

Every PSP game PSM2 has ever reviewed. Look! Down there!

APE ACADEMY	66	85%	
BURNOUT LEGENDS	**67**	**92%**	
Like being smashed in the face in the best way possible. Stunning.			
BUST-A-MOVE GHOST	75	72%	
CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION REMIXED	75	33%	
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER	70	51%	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	66	84%	
CODED ARMS	67	52%	
THE CON	69	45%	
CRASH TAG TEAM RACING	70	65%	
DARKSTALKER CHRONICLES	66	74%	
DAXTER	74	86%	
DEATH JR	69	47%	
DRAGON BALL Z: SHIN BUDOKAI	74	71%	
EVERYBODY'S GOLF	66	81%	
EXIT	72	84%	
F1 GRAND PRIX	66	71%	
FIFA 06	69	81%	
FIFA 2005	66	68%	
FIFA STREET 2	72	61%	
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3	73	84%	
FIRED UP	66	54%	
FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD	73	80%	
FRANTIX	70	20%	
FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE	73	60%	
GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES	**69**	**90%**	
GTAIII Remixed, in essence, but still an absolute stormer of a game.			
GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX	70	50%	
GRADIUS PORTABLE	75	79%	
GO! SUDOKU	70	60%	
GRIPSHIFT	70	78%	
HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE	70	51%	

TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

A game with too many controls to properly transfer to PSP. A great shame.

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

One of PSP's finest games, and total redemption for the *Syphon Filter* series.

VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

Joe comes to PSP, but in the form of a lame *Smash Bros*-style beat-'em-up. Very disappointing.

INFECTED	71	77%	
KAO CHALLENGERS	70	69%	
KING KONG	71	56%	
KOLOOMN	73	78%	
LEMMINGS	72	78%	
LORD OF THE RINGS TACTICS	69	80%	
LUMINES	66	85%	
MADDEN NFL 06	72	71%	
MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS	70	58%	
ME & MY KATAMARI	73	81%	
MEDIEVIL RESURRECTION	66	67%	
MEGAMAN POWERED UP	74	78%	
METAL GEAR ACID	66	57%	
METAL GEAR ACID 2	72	80%	
MERCURY	67	85%	
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3	66	87%	
MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES: EXTENDED PLAY	73	68%	
MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM	75	74%	
MX VS ATV UNLEASHED	74	61%	
NAMCO BATTLE MUSEUM	70	54%	
NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED	70	68%	
NBA BALLERS: REBOUND	74	78%	
NBA LIVE 06	72	74%	
NBA STREET SHOWDOWN	66	80%	
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND RIVALS	66	84%	
NFL STREET 2	66	72%	
OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST	73	88%	
PQ: PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT	74	77%	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: REVELATIONS	71	76%	
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	69	80%	
PURSUIT FORCE	68	80%	
RIDGE RACER	66	88%	
THE SIMS 2	71	67%	
SOCOM US NAVY SEALS: FIRETEAM BRAVO	71	83%	
SPIDER-MAN 2	66	50%	
SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS	74	72%	
SMART BOMB	66	36%	
SSX ON TOUR	69	79%	
STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2	70	80%	
STREET RIDERS	75	51%	
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX	72	84%	
SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR	75	88%	
TALKMAN	72	79%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	66	76%	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006	69	72%	
TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	66	79%	
TOKOBOT	71	65%	
TOMB RAIDER LEGEND	75	64%	
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX	66	81%	
UNTOLD LEGENDS: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE	66	66%	
VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE	75	60%	
VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR	**66**	**91%**	
A 'must have' title. The best sports sim on PSP.			
WINNING ELEVEN 9	68	79%	
WIPEOUT PURE	66	84%	
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	66	80%	
WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2005	67	70%	
WORLD TOUR SOCCER	68	73%	
WORMS: OPEN WARFARE	73	63%	
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006	70	85%	

BRONZE AWARD: A very enjoyable and solid game scoring 70-79% | SILVER AWARD: A top-notch PS2 title that scored between 80-89% | GOLD AWARD: A game scoring 90% or more. An absolute classic.

PS2 / PSP UDS

Pro-Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PLAYSTATION

Another month, another set of ways for you to cheat your way through your games. Nice.

01 TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

CHEAT MODE
Successfully complete the indicated task to unlock the corresponding cheat. When a task has been completed, a message with the code will appear. Cheats cannot be enabled until they are first unlocked in this manner.

BULLETPROOF LARA
Successfully complete England with a time less than 27:00 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold L1 and press ⊗, R1, △, R1, □, R2. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

DRAW ENEMY HEALTH
Successfully complete Bolivia with a time less than 12:30 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold L1 and press □, ○, ⊗, R2, R1, Triangle. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

INFINITE ASSAULT RIFLE AMMUNITION
Successfully complete Japan with a time less than 12:15 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold R2 and press ⊗, ○, ⊗, R1, □, △. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

INFINITE SHOTGUN AMMUNITION
Successfully complete Ghana with a time less than 20:00 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold R2 and press R1, ○, □, L1, □, ⊗. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

INFINITE SMG AMMUNITION
Successfully complete Peru with a time less than 21:30 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold R2 and press ○, △, L1, R1, ⊗, ○. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

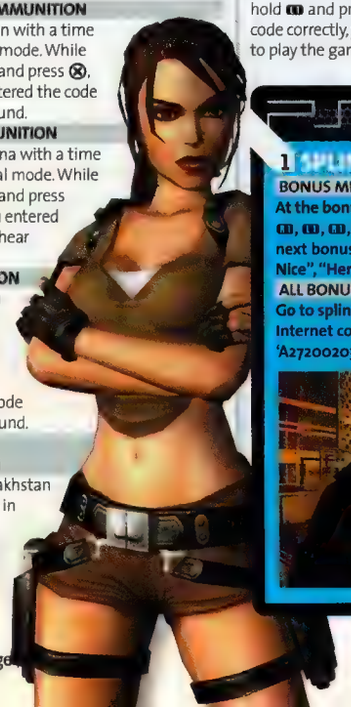
INFINITE GRENADE LAUNCHER AMMUNITION
Successfully complete Kazakhstan with a time less than 27:10 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold R2 and press R1, △, R1, ○, L1, □. If entered correctly, you will hear a sound.

ONE SHOT KILL
Successfully complete Bolivia Redux with a time less than 4:15 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold L1 and press △, ⊗, △, □, R2, ○. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

WIELD EXCALIBUR
Successfully complete Nepal with a time less than 13:40 in Time Trial mode. While playing the game, hold R2 and press △, ⊗, ○, R1, △, L1. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

WIELD SOUL REAVER
Successfully complete the game and all time trials. While playing the game, hold R2 and press ⊗, R1, ○, R1, L1, □. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

NO TEXTURES
Successfully complete the game. While playing the game, hold R1 and press R2, ⊗, ○, ⊗, △, R1. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. But really, who wants to play the game *with no frikkin' textures?* Sheesh.



PS2 TIP

1 SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

BONUS MISSIONS
At the bonus mission screen, hold SELECT and press L1, R1, L1, R1, L1 R1. Repeat the code to unlock the next bonus mission. The bonus missions are "Paris-Nice", "Heroin Factory", and "TV Free Indonesia".

ALL BONUS MISSIONS
Go to splintercellessentials.com on your PSP's Internet connection, select 'PSP User' and enter 'A27200203S' as a code.

SILENT HILL COLLECTION SPECIAL!

TIPS ROUND-UP

SILENT HILL 2

REVEAL SIGNS
Unlock all five endings, then start a new game. All signs will now be revealed.

CHAINSAW
Successfully complete the game on the normal difficulty and normal puzzle difficulty settings. Start a new game to find a chainsaw among logs before the cemetery.

HYPER SPRAY
Successfully complete the game two times. Start a new game to find the Hyper Spray on the south side of the motor home.

BOOK OF LOST MEMORIES
Successfully complete the game. Start a new game and look for the newspaper stand near the Texxon Gas Station. The Book Of Lost Memories can be found inside.

DOG KEY
Successfully complete the game with the Rebirth ending. Start a new game and a dog house will now appear near Jack's Inn. Look inside the dog house to find the Dog Key.

OBSIDIAN GOBLET
Successfully complete the game. Start a new game and enter the Historical Society building. The Obsidian Goblet can be found on a shelf.

SILENT HILL 3

DOUGLAS IN UNDERWEAR
Successfully complete the game, then highlight the "Extra New Game" option at the main menu and press ↑(x2), ↓(x2), ←, →, ←, →, ○, ⊗. If you entered the code correctly, Heather will sigh after you choose a difficulty and riddle level. In some scenes when you see Douglas, he will be wearing his underwear.

EXTRA OPTIONS MENU
At the options screen, press L1, L2, R1, or R2 to display an extra options menu.

BEGINNER FIGHTING DIFFICULTY SETTING
Intentionally die twice during a game on the normal fighting difficulty setting. The fighting difficulty setting can now be set to 'Beginner' in the extra options menu.

LIFE DISPLAY OPTION
Successfully complete

02 ICE AGE 2

INFINITE HEALTH
Pause the game and press ↑, →, ↓, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ←.

INFINITE ENERGY
Pause the game and press ↓, ←, →, ↓(x2), →, ←, ↓.

INFINITE PEBBLES
Pause the game and press ↓(x2), ←, ↑(x2), →, ↑, ↓.

03 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3: MUTANT NIGHTMARE

INVINCIBILITY
Enter 'MDLDSSLR' as a password.

INFINITE SHURIKEN
Enter 'LMDRRMSR' as a password.

MAX OUGI
Enter 'RRDMLSDL' as a password.

SHURIKEN LOSER
Enter 'LLMSRDMS' as a password. Shuriken will no longer be available.

ENDURANCE
Enter 'DMLDMRLD' as a password. Healing items will no longer be available.

SUSHI PARTY
Enter 'SLLMRSLD' as a password. All healing items will turn into Temaki Sushi.

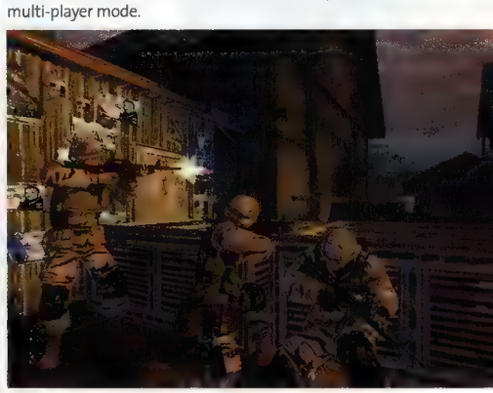
INSTANT DEATH
Enter 'LDMSLRDD' as a password. One enemy hit will kill the turtles.

ENEMIES 2X POWER
Enter 'MSRLSMML' as a password.

ENEMIES 2X DEFENSE
Enter 'SLRMLSSM' as a password.

04 FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: 10 HAMMERS

ALL CO-OP LEVELS
Enter the word 'fullspectrumpwnage' as a code at the 'Cheats' menu – found under the 'Bonus' option at the title screen – in order to unlock all of the Co-Op levels in multi-player mode.



TIPS ROUND-UP

TIP

2 VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

PLAY AS ANDROID RACHEL
Successfully complete Trial 29 to unlock thev Android Rachel character.

PLAY AS CHARLES THE THIRD
Successfully complete the second level of Story mode to unlock Charles The Third.

PLAY AS DEVIL BUSTER DANTE
Successfully complete the first level of Story mode (all four chapters) to unlock Devil Buster Dante.

PLAY AS DIRECTOR BLUE
Successfully complete Trial 1 to unlock Director Blue.

PLAY AS FIGHTER BIANKY AND FRIENDS
Successfully complete Trial 13 to unlock Fighter Bianky and Friends.

PLAY AS GRAN BRUCE
Successfully complete Trial 35 to unlock Gran Bruce.

PLAY AS HEROINE SILVIA
Successfully complete Trial 37 to unlock the Heroine Silvia character.

PLAY AS HULK DAVIDSON
Successfully complete Trial 14 to unlock Hulk Davidson as a playable character.

PLAY AS MANAGER JET
Successfully complete Trial 19 to unlock the Manager Jet character.

PLAY AS MOVIE FAN JOE
Successfully complete Trial 5 to unlock Movie Fan Joe as a playable character.

PLAY AS STYLISH ALASTOR
Successfully complete Trial 34 to unlock Stylish Alastor as a playable character.

05 DEVIL MAY CRY 3: SPECIAL EDITION

CHEAT MODE
At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 plus D-pad ↖ and left stick ↘ to unlock all bonus modes, alternate costumes and gallery entries.

EASY MODE
Intentionally fail a mission on the Normal difficulty setting three to five times. A message will appear, stating that you have unlocked the Easy difficulty level. Alternately, successfully complete the game on the Normal difficulty setting to unlock Easy mode.

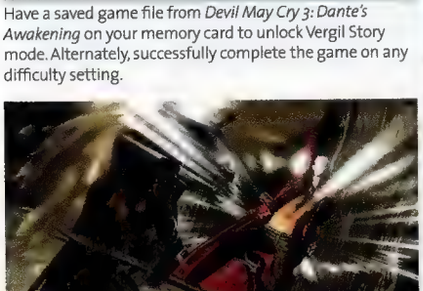
HARD MODE
Successfully complete the game on the Normal difficulty setting to unlock the Hard difficulty setting.

VERY HARD MODE
Successfully complete the game on the Hard difficulty setting to unlock the Very Hard difficulty setting.

DANTE MUST DIE AND VERGIL MUST DIE MODES
Successfully complete the game with Dante or Vergil on the Very Hard difficulty setting to unlock the Must Die difficulty setting for that character.

BLOODY PALACE MODE
Have a saved game file from *Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening* on your memory card to unlock Bloody Palace mode. Alternately, successfully complete the game on any difficulty setting.

VERGIL STORY MODE
Have a saved game file from *Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening* on your memory card to unlock Vergil Story mode. Alternately, successfully complete the game on any difficulty setting.



06 TOURIST TRophy

BIKES
Complete the indicated task to unlock the bike:
7 HONDA CBR 1000RRW SUZUKA 8H '05: Win the TT World Series.

the game on the hard difficulty setting to unlock 'Life Display' at the extra options screen.

PUZZLE IN BOOK STORE
When putting the books out of order, the solution is '4, 5, 2, 3, 1' on the Normal action and Normal riddle difficulty settings. The solution on Hard difficulty is '8, 3, 5, 2'.

SECOND LOBBY DOOR PASSWORD IN BROOKHAVEN HOSPITAL
The password is an easy maths problem. The first digit is greater than the second digit. The second digit is the third digit multiplied by two. The third digit is half of the first digit. The solution is '8, 6, 3, 4' on the Normal action and Normal riddle difficulty settings. The solution on the Easy difficulty setting is '4, 6, 3, 9'. The solution on the Hard difficulty setting is '4, 8, 9, 6'.

THIRD LOBBY DOOR PASSWORD IN BROOKHAVEN HOSPITAL
For this, go to floor B, then to the storeroom. Go to the end of the room and take a photo of the bloody wall with a shelf near it. The solution is '4, 7, 5, 6' on the Normal action and Normal riddle difficulty settings. The solution on the Hard difficulty setting is '1, 3, 2, 8'.

CREMATORY PUZZLE IN BROOKHAVEN HOSPITAL
The solution on the Hard riddle setting is '9, 2, 7, 1'.

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

BRAND NEW FEAR MODE
Successfully complete the game on any difficulty setting. Save the game after the credits complete to unlock the "Brand New Fear" option.

FULL WEAPONS/APARTMENT REPLENISH MODE
Achive a 10 star ranking in One Weapon mode to unlock Full Weapons/Apartment Replenish mode. This mode has the following features: At the start of the game, upon entering the subway system you will see that each weapon is laid out in front of you. You can grab every one of them. Also, whenever you return to your apartment, you will find six boxes of bullets in the laundry room as well as ten Health Drinks in your refrigerator.

CHAINSAW
Start a game in "Brand New Fear" mode. After entering the Forest World for the first time go to Jasper's car. Search near by for a cut tree trunk. Look next to it to find the chainsaw.

SUBMACHINE GUN
Complete the game with a rank of at least nine big stars. Start Brand New Fear mode and look in Room 202 in the Apartment World to find a submachine gun.

ARAI RAPIDE-SR YUKI: Win the TZ-250 Championship.
ARAI RX-7 RR4 (PDI ORIGINAL COLOR): Get a 'Gold' rank in the Super License tests.
ARAI SNC RX-7 RR4 HAGA 04: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Novice license tests.
ARAI SNC RX-7 RR4 KITAGAWA: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Novice license tests.
HONDA CB1300 SUPER FOUR '05: Win the Grand Valley Speedway in the Heavyweight series.
HONDA CB1300 SUPER FOUR '05: Win the High Speed Ring in the Heavyweight series.
HONDA CB400FOUR '74: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Junior license tests.
HONDA CB400FOUR '74: Win the Autumn Ring Mini in the Sunday Cup.
HONDA CB400SS RACING MODIFIED '05: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Novice license tests.
HONDA CB750F '79: Win the Autumn Ring race in the Under 1000cc class. Alternately, win the Twin Ring Motegi Super Speedway in the Heavyweight series.
HONDA CBR954 FIREBLADE '02: Win the Midfirel Raceway race in the 1000cc class.
HONDA NR750 '92: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Expert license tests.
HONDA VFR400R RACING MODIFIED '89: Win the 2 Stroke Series.
HONDA VT250F RACING MODIFIED '82: Win the Suzuka Circut West Course in the Under 750cc class.
HONDA XR250 MOTARD '05: Win the Suzuka Circut East Course in the Under 750cc class.
HONDA XR250 MOTARD '05: Win the Twin Ring Motegi Super Speedway race in the 250cc class.
MORIWAKI CBR600RR-MORIWAKI '05: Win the Tskuba Circut in the Over 1000cc class.
MORIWAKI MOTUL TIGER RACING CBR 1000RR SUZUKA 8H '05: Win the Super Sports 600 Series.
MV AUGUSTA F4-1000S '05: Win the Apricot Hill Raceway in the Over 1000cc class.
MV AUGUSTA F4-1000S '05: Win the Trial Mountain Circuit in the Under 1000cc class.
RS TAICHI GP-MAX R070 (PDI ORIGINAL COLOR): Get a 'Gold' rank in the Super License tests.
SHOEI X-8 SPIII WAKAI HELMET: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Junior license tests.
SHOEI X-ELEVEN NORICK TC-2 BLUE HELMET: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Junior license tests to unlock this one.
SUZUKI DR-Z400SM '05: Win the Twin Ring Motegi East Short Course in the Under 250cc class.
SUZUKI RG250 GAMMA RACING MODIFIED '83: Win the Midfield Raceway in the Clubman Cup.
SUZUKI SKYWAVE 650 '04: Win the Suzuka Circuit East Course in the Sunday Cup.
SUZUKI SKYWAVE 650 '04: Win the Suzuka Circuit West Course in the Clubman Cup.
TRICK*STAR TSURUTA SUZUKA 8 HOUR: Finish first in the 80's Heroes Championship races.
TRICK*STAR ZX-10R SUZUKA 8 HOUR '05: Finish first in the 80's Heroes Championship races.
TRIUMPH DAYTONA 650 '05: Win the Twin Ring Motegi East Short Course in the Clubman Cup.
TRIUMPH DAYTONA 650 '05: Win the Twin Ring Motegi Super Speedway in the Sunday Cup.
YAMAHA FZR400 RACING MODIFIED '86: Win the TMAX championship.
YAMAHA RZ250 '80: Win the Grand Valley East in the Under 250cc class.
YAMAHA RZ250 '80: Win the Grand Valley East race in the 250cc class. Alternately, win the High-Speed Ring in the Over 1000cc class.
YAMAHA RZ250 RACING MODIFIED '80: Win the Tsukuba Circut in the Under 750cc class.
YOSHIMURA KATANA 1135R '01: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Super license test.
YOSHIMURA KATANA 1135R '01: Get a 'Gold' rank in the Super License tests.
YOSHIMURA SUZUKI JOMO WITH SRION GSX-R 1000 SUZUKA 8H '05: Win the Super Bike 1000 Series.
YSP & PRESTO RACING NAKATOMI SUZUKA 8H: Win the TZ-250 Championship.
YSP & PRESTO RACING YZF-R1 SUZUKA 8H: Win the TZ-250 Championship.
YSP & PRESTO RACING YZF-R1 SUZUKA 8H '05: Win the 250cc Competition Model Series.
And that's quite enough different types of motorbike, we reckon.

Pro-Tips

TRAINING YOU IN THE DARK ARTS OF PLAYSTATION

07 OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

100% COMPLETION

Enter 'ENTIRETY' as a license plate name to get a 100% game completion. Note: Choose to decline when prompted to confirm the changes.

08 MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX

ALL CITIES IN ARCADE MODE

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'roadtrip' or 'crosscountry' at the cheat menu to unlock all cities in arcade mode.

INCREASE CAR MASS IN ARCADE MODE

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'hyperagro' at the cheat menu.

NO DAMAGE

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'ontheroad' at the cheat menu.

FASTER PEDESTRIANS

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'urbansprawl' at the cheat menu. Note: This code also unlocks all cities in arcade mode.

ARGO SPECIAL MOVE

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'dfens' at the menu to unlock the Argo special move.

ROAR SPECIAL MOVE

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'Rjnr' at the cheat menu to unlock the Roar special move.

ZONE SPECIAL MOVE

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'allin' at the cheat menu to unlock the Zone special move.

BUNNY HEAD

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'getheadl' at the cheat menu.

FLAMING HEAD

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'trythisathome' at the cheat menu.

PUMPKIN HEAD

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'getheadk' at the cheat menu.

SKULL HEAD

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'getheadn' at the cheat menu.

SNOWMAN HEAD

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'getheadm' at the cheat menu.

YELLOW SMILE HEAD

Enter the options screen and select the Cheats option. Enter 'getheadj' at the cheat menu.

PS2 TIP

3 SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

FAMAS WEAPON

Successfully complete Training Mission 2 in single-player mode with a time of less than 3:00 to unlock the FAMAS weapon.

M1 SUPER 90 WEAPON

Destroy five DU containers in Mission 4-1 in single-player mode to unlock the M1 Super 90 in Mission mode.

M16A2 WEAPON

Destroy five DU containers in Mission 4-2 in single-player mode to unlock the M16A2 in Mission mode.

M249 SAW WEAPON

Successfully complete the 'KemSynth Tower' mission with a time less than 2:45 to unlock the M249 SAW weapon.

M4 CARBINE WEAPON

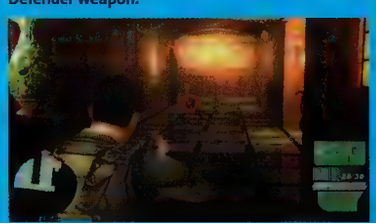
Destroy five DU containers in Mission 4-3 in single-player mode to unlock the M4 Carbine weapon in Mission mode.

SMAW ROCKET LAUNCHER WEAPON

Shoot the small warheads in Mission 4-3 to unlock the SMAW rocket launcher in Mission mode.

SHOT DEFENDER WEAPON

Successfully complete the 'Sana Yemen' mission with a time of less than 3:40 to unlock the Shot Defender weapon.



09 ARMORED CORE: NINE BREAKER

ARMORED CORE: NEXUS SECRET PARTS

Import a saved game file from *Nine Breaker*'s prequel *Armored Core: Nexus* to unlock the following parts. Alternatively, successfully complete one of the following tasks in *Armored Core: Nine Breaker* to unlock the corresponding part:

ATTACK TRAINING

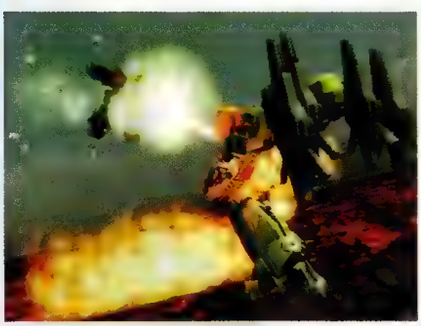
CR LH97L: Complete Accuracy mode
KUJAKU: Complete Power mode
HOHSHI: Complete Judgment mode
KARURA: Complete Single mode
YWH07-DRAGON (R ARM): Complete Melee mode

DEFENSE TRAINING

WH06PL ORC (L ARM): Complete Evade mode
JIREN: Complete Durability mode
CR B83TP: Complete Heat Resisting mode
CR YH07S2: Complete Single mode
LN01-SEAL: Complete Melee mode

OVERALL TRAINING

WB28R SIREN: Complete Run and Attack
MF04-COWRY: Complete Run and Defense
KANGI: Complete Defense and Attack
WB31B-PEGASUS: Complete Single
WH04HL KRSW (R ARM): Complete Melee



PSM2 MICRO GUIDE

As the hardest hits BESTED in one fat eyeful

THIS MONTH: TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

EACH LEVEL DESTROYED!

BOLIVIA

There are two ticking gems here. The first one you'll find is in the ruins with the bells. Shoot the bottom bell, pull the bell rope, then shoot the platform when the other one has risen. Grapple to that platform, then shoot the bell rope to lower the bell. Grapple to the bell, then shoot the bell rope to lower the bell. Grapple to the bell, then shoot the bell rope to lower the bell. Grapple to the bell

GET A WICKED FREE DVD EVERY ISSUE!

NUMBER ONE FOR HEROES, ACTION & FUN!

TAKE TOGO TO INTERNATIONAL GLORY!

PLAY THE WORLD CUP IN PRO EVO5

Don't want to buy the new World Cup *FIFA*? Don't worry – here's how to set up a World Cup tournament in *PES5* and create all the missing teams for yourself.

THE EASY WAY

The easiest way is to choose the International Cup in the Cup Mode – make sure there's a maximum of 32 teams and select Group League in the Condition Types. Then fill in all the groups like so...

GROUP A
GERMANY
COSTA RICA
POLAND
ECUADOR

GROUP B
ENGLAND
PARAGUAY
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
SWEDEN

GROUP C
ARGENTINA
IVORY COAST
SERBIA & MONTENEGRO
HOLLAND

GROUP D
MEXICO
IRAN
ANGOLA
PORTUGAL

GROUP E
ITALY
GHANA
USA
CZECH REPUBLIC

GROUP F
BRAZIL
CROATIA
AUSTRALIA
JAPAN

GROUP G
FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
SOUTH KOREA
TOGO

GROUP H
SPAIN
UKRAINE
TUNISIA
SAUDI ARABIA

THE PROBLEM

PES5 doesn't include Angola, Ghana, Togo and Trinidad and Tobago.

THE SOLUTION

You need to create the sides from scratch. But *PES5* doesn't let you alter international team names. To get round this problem, you need to turn four club teams into the missing international sides. Since club teams aren't permitted to enter the International Cup, choose the Konami Cup option, allow ANY team, then select 32 teams maximum and Group League in the Condition Type.

EDITING NATIONAL TEAMS SQUADS

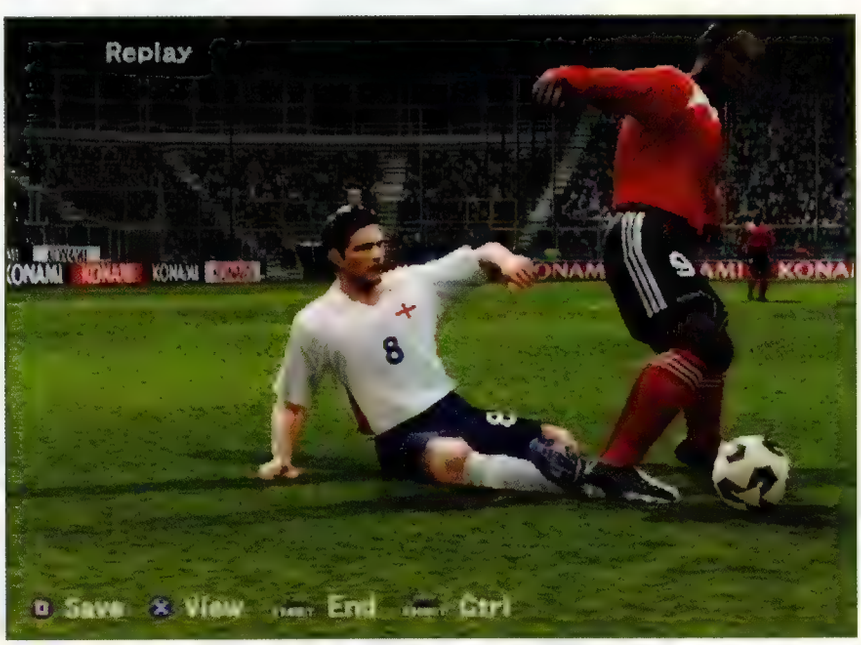
Go to the Register Player option in the Edit menu, select which squad member you want to replace, and choose from the eligible alternatives. World Cup squads comprise 23 players, with lists submitted to FIFA by May 15th. To find out who made the cut and who didn't, go to http://fifaworldcup.yahoo.com

CREATING NEW INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

Choose four clubs to modify. WARNING! As this process will effect club line-ups, it may be worth starting a new *PES* option file on a separate memory card. First, change the team names, flags and kits, then get to work on the squads. To get rid of existing players, go into the Register Player section, select the team you want to edit, then press ◎ to remove the players to the Non Affiliated section. You can only do this until the squad gets down to 16, but it should clear enough space.

REGISTERING THE NEW PLAYERS

If the player exists in *PES5*, find him in his club squad and move him to the new team. If not, he must be created. You can create players from scratch then register them individually, or you can modify existing players in the team you're changing.



ANGOLA

THE FLAG

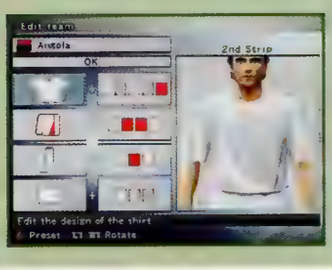
- Choose the From Scratch option, 128 colours then Edit Pixels.
- Put in the rectangle with the red base colour.
- Use the grid tool to horizontally dissect the rectangle, then use it as a guide to draw a black line across the middle.
- Fill in the bottom section with black.
- Draw the emblem as best you can with yellow, using the freestyle tool on its thinnest setting. This bit's entirely reliant on your art skills, we're afraid.

HOME KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) Colour: 29-06-01
Part1: OFF
Part2: C11 – 29-06-01
Part3: A19 – yellow
Part4: A6 – black
SHORTS
C13
29-06-01 – black – black - 29-06-01
SOCKS
C8
29-06-01 – black - 29-06-01
Name: Font 5 type 1
Number: Font B3, Colour Yellow

AWAY KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) Color: White
Part1: OFF



Part2: C11 – white
Part3: OFF
Part4: A6 - 29-06-01
SHORTS
C13 – white – 29-06-01 – 29-06-01 – white
SOCKS
C8 – white – 29-06-01 – white

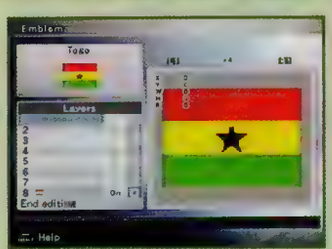
STYLE OF PLAY

While they may not have any star players, the Angolans have a lot of players in the Portugese leagues and so are technically adept and can pass the ball well. If things go well, expect them to line up 4-4-2 with midfield diamond, but they may revert to a 5-3-2 if they start to concede heavily.

SQUAD (correct at time of going to press)

NAME	HEIGHT	AGE	FOOT	POSITION
Ricardo	183	36	R	GK
Jacinto	168	31	R	SB
Lebo-Lebo	193	28	R	CB
Jamba	168	31	R	CB
Marco Abreu	177	27	L	SB
André	175	27	R	AMF
Figueiredo	170	33	R	DMF
Mendonca	172	23	R	AMF
Edson	177	26	R	SMF
Akwa	28	29	R	CF
Maurito	182	24	R	CF
RESERVES				
Lama	25	25	R	GK
Kali	27	187	R	CB
Rui Marques	?	24	R	CB
Loco	21	184	R	CB/DMF
Delgado	26	178	L	CB
Valente	173	36	L	LB
Ze Kalanga	170	22	R	CM
Freddy	175	26	R	CM
Gilberto	176	23	L	CM
Mantorras (Malyorras)		Lisbonera (Other Leagues A)		
Flavio	175	26	R	SS
Love	183	27	R	CF

GHANA

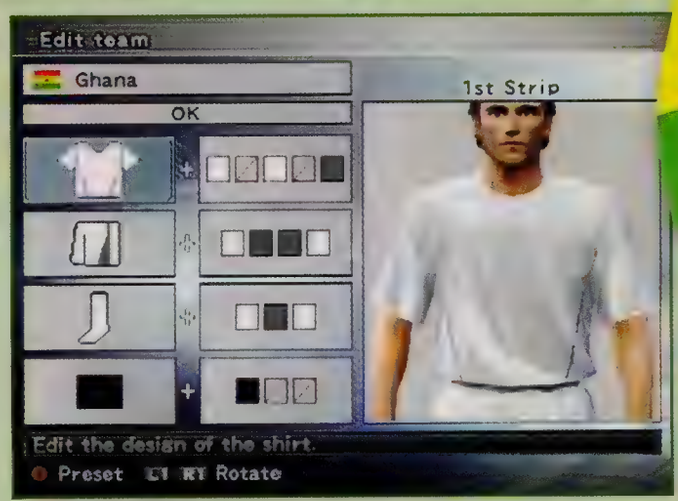


THE FLAG

- Choose the From Scratch option, then 16 colours and Edit layers
- Get a grid up, then choose the solid Star image on page 7 of the Icon samples, and position that in the middle of the grid. To position it correctly in the middle, you can use another three band flag (eg Germany) as a temporary second layer.
- Once the star is in position, colour it black, then delete the temporary second layer.
- Now choose the Senegalese flag for the second layer and rotate it 90 degrees.

HOME KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) – White
Part1: OFF
Part2: C11 – White
Part3: OFF -
Part4: A6 – Grey
SHORTS
C13
White – grey – grey – white
SOCKS
C8
White – grey – white
Name: Font 5 – type 1
Number: B3 grey



AWAY KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) white
Part1: OFF

Part2: C11 – Yellow, part3: OFF, Part4: A6 – white
SHORTS
C13 – yellow – black – black – yellow
SOCKS
C8 – yellow – black – yellow

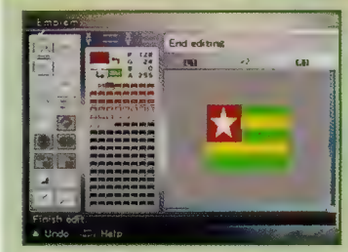
STYLE OF PLAY

Ghana have an strong midfield, but are more defense than creative so they have problems scoring. At the African Nations Cup, they tried a 4-3-2-1 formation with Essien providing support to the lone front man. This hasn't proved a success so they'll probably go with a 4-4-2, with Essien and Appiah deep, allowing the wide men forward.

SQUAD (correct at time of going to press)

NAME	HEIGHT	AGE	FOOT	POSITION
Adjei	182	25	R	GK
Mensah	Chievo Verona			
Pappoe	176	25	R	CB
Kuffour	A.S. Roma			
Edusei	176	25	L	SB
Essien	Chelsea			
Appiah	Constanti (Other Leagues A)			
Muntari	Udinese			
Pimpong	184	24	R	CMF
Gyan	186	20	R	CF
Amoah	Vitesse (Other Leagues A)			
RESERVES				
Owu	180	23	R	GK
Issah	182	23	R	CB
Dickoh	187	23	R	CD
Yakubu	Vitesse Arnhem			
Daniel Coleman	180	22	R	CB
Osei	180	23	R	DMF
Hamza Mohammed	186	25	R	CMF
Attram	171	25	R	CMF
Edusei	Sampdoria			
Boakye	182	24	R	CF
Agyemang	182	25	R	CF
Yussif Chisbah	171	22	R	AMF

TOGO



THE FLAG

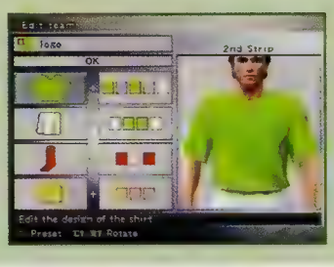
- The Togo flag has to be created in the Edit Pixel option. First click three times on the Grid tool to get the guidelines. Then do the bottom two strips. Using the drawing tool, mark off the area then fill it with colour.
- Make sure you choose the right colour to mark off the strips. We made the bottom strip four squares deep and all the others three squares deep.
- Now draw a vertical line from the top a few squares in from the middle to create the red square in the top left. Fill this in and then complete the other strips. Stock this pattern then go into Modify and then Edit Layers. Find the white solid star in the icon selection and place this on top your flag. Move it into position on the red square and shrink it down to the right size.

HOME KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) - White
Part1: OFF, part2: C11, part3: OFF, part4: A6
SHORTS
C13
SOCKS
C8
Name: Font 5 – type 1 Number: B3

AWAY KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar)
Part1: OFF



Part2: C11, part3: OFF, Part4: A6
SHORTS C13 **SOCKS** C8

STYLE OF PLAY

It's not clear how Togo will play as they recently sacked the coach that got them to the finals. The formation that used in qualification was 3-1-5-1 with Adebayor at the tip, holding the ball up and waiting for support. Togo's new coach, a German called Otto Pfister, is known to prefer 4-4-2, with a support striker that tucks into midfield to make a 4-5-1 when defending. Whatever they use, their main tactic is to get the ball to Adebayor, usually via midfielder Senaya, and hope he makes something happen.

SQUAD (correct at time of going to press)

NAME	HEIGHT	AGE	FOOT	POSITION
Agassa	(Moselle) French			
Akoto	192	25	R	CB
Abalo	177	30	R	SB
Atte-Oudeyi	175	25	L	SB
Nibombé	196	25	R	CB
J. Senaya	166	22	R	SMF/CF
Aziawonou	185	26	R	CM
Toure-Mamam	177	20	R	SMF
Romao	180	22	R	CM
Kader-Coubadja	169	21	R	CF
Adebayor	Azur (French)			
RESERVES				
Tchagnirou	180	28	R	GK
Mamah	180	20	R	RB
Tchangai	183	27	R	CB
Assemoassa	184	25	R	CB
Cherif Toure	177	25	R	AMF
Salifou	180	22	R	AMF
Ouro-Akpo	178	21	R	CF
Coubadja	174	27	R	CF
Kassim	180	24	R	DMF
Mathias	183	20	R	SB
Olufadé	170	26	R	WF

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

THE FLAG

- This is one you'll have to create from scratch, but it's quite easy, so choose the same option as you did when you made the Angolan Flag.
- Draw a back line from top left to bottom right using the Line Marker with number 5 thickness.
- Using line marker 1 give this black line a white outline.
- Fill in the two remaining triangles using the shade that's seven down and four in, at the colour menu.

HOME KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) – 21-3-3
Part 1: B8 – 31-31-31
Part 2: C6 – 31-31-31
Part 3: B37 – 21-3-3
Part 4: B17 – 31-31-31
SHORTS
C18
0-0-0, 31-31-31 , 31-31-31 , 0-0-0
SOCKS
A5
19-3-3 – 31-31-31 – 19-3-3
Name: Font A5
Number: C3

AWAY KIT

SHIRT
Type1 (no collar) 31-31-31
Part 1: B8 – 21-3-3

Part 2: C6 – 21-3-3, part 3: B37 – 31-31-31
Part 4: B17 – 21-3-3
SHORTS
C18 – 31-31-31 , 0-0-0, 0-0-0 , 31-31-31
SOCKS
A5 – 31-31-31, 19-3-3, 31-31-31

STYLE OF PLAY

Key to Trinidad style is Dwight Yorke. He tends to play just off the lone frontman in a 4-4-1-1 formation. At the back Andrews and Lawrence make a formidable pairing that's extremely powerful in the air but have trouble against pace. Expect the back line to play quite deep. The other player to note is Birchall, who has an explosive shot.

SQUAD (correct at time of going to press)

NAME	HEIGHT	AGE	FOOT	POSITION
Hislop	West Ham			
Gray	185	29	R	CB
Lawrence	201	31	R	CB
Andrews	Rangers			
A. John	183	30	L	SB
Birchall	175	21	R	DMF
Edwards	180	27	R	AMF
Whitley	180	28	R	DMF
Dwight Yorke	178	34	R	SS/CF
Aurtis Whitley	180	28	R	DMF
S. John	185	29	L	CF
RESERVES				
Warner	193	31	R	GK
Jack	191	30	R	GK
Cox	183	35	R	CB
Spann	175	24	R	CMF
Sancho	183	29	R	CB
Latapy	174	38	R	AMF
Theobald	178	23	R	AMF
Wolfe	175	24	R	CF
Rahim	173	27	R	AMF
Scotland	173	27	R	CF
Glen	175	24	R	CF
Jones	188	21	R	CF

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Hawaii Five 0	tv4	Simpsons	tv12	Indiana Jones	old4
King Kong	tv5	South Park	tv13	Excorcist	old5
Knight Rider	tv6	Twilight Zone	tv14	Halloween	old6
Mission Impossible	tv7	X-Files	tv15	Axel-F	old7
The Muppet Show	tv8	Flintstones	tv16	Back To The Future	old8

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DEADIFY EVERYONE!

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY
KILL LIKE A PRO

Keep that freshly-laundered shirt clean and help Mr Barcode 'check out' in style – it's PSM2's guide to the quickest, boldest, *baldest* hits.

DEATH OF A SHOWMAN

The only stumbling block is poisoning Clarence's secretary's drink. Whip out the syringe by pressing R1 when the crosshair is over the bottle.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Hammer (lift control room), TMP (toilets), Dragunov (lookout), Desert Eagle (final room).

EASY PLAY: Walk up to the gates and wait – Agent 47's first kill will be carried out automatically in a cut-scene. Cheers!

SCOPE AND GLORY: No need to worry about accuracy on lower difficulties.

DEAD TO RIGHTS: Clarence will cower like a wet cat no matter how much noise you make on the way up to his office. Show him the photograph, make sure that he's dead with a double-tap, then head for the window.

A VINTAGE YEAR

MUST BE CHOKING: Hold R1 as you sneak up for a faster, nastier kill.

Enter the outer gate on the west wall and clamber up the boxes, across the garden and up the pipe to an open window. Through the left door and down the stairs is a lock-pickable guard dorm, with snoozy guard and VIP Guard uniform. Nip upstairs, crack the lock of one of the rooms at either end of the corridor and you can fibrewire violin-fiddler Don Fernando.

As for Manuel: there's a point he's strolling alone in the western room of the wine cellar. Execute the hit, then tip his corpse into the wine vat. Your exit route's the hangar – look for the barrel-shaped door at the back of the cellar.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Shotgun, knife (Hacienda kitchen, first floor), SAF SMG (Hacienda guard dorm), Snubnose (Don Fernando).

VAT MAN: Manuel's bodyguards don't tend to hang around this spot – why guard a big tub full of wine? – so you're free to send his corpse for a dip unseen.

CURTAINS DOWN

Hint: There's a ticket in your pocket. Which can be swapped for a Real WWI Pistol at the cloakrooms. Aha! Wait for a technician in the nearby toilets, pop his corpse in the laundry basket and grab his clothes – and his toolbox outside. You've then got an unchallenged route to the dressing rooms through the basement. Enter the northernmost dressing room, shoot the mirror, then hide in the cupboard and 'break the leg' of the actor who walks in. Take his place on stage (on the white cross) and kill Alvado when the music reaches its crescendo.

As for Delahunt – who'll run onstage to wail at the humanity of it all once Alvado's breathed his last – we take the unsubtle approach. Simply drop a toolbox with a RU-AP mine inside nearby, then... bang! Alternatively, bombs can be used on the lighting rig or the chandalier winch.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Nailer (basement), MP5 (bodyguards)

FLIP YOU: The cloakroom guard's temperemental: restart if he refuses to hand you the goods.

DOG STANDARD: Pretty much every level of *Hitman* has a toilet – the ideal place for an easy kill.

DRESSING DOWN: Seven years' bad luck for breaking the mirror – but also a risk-free sneak-up.

DOOR TO YOU: Be very careful how you act around Alvado. One false move and he'll smell a rat.

FLATLINE

EYE MAN: Don't edge too far to the left on the roof – an eagle-eyed nurse will catch sight of you.

THE STRANGLER: This chap never gets off his chair – it's like he *wants* to have his airways cut off.

To the west of the clinic, next to the Medical Wing, you can use a pipe to pootle across the roof. Drop right, sneak up on the guard, then steal the keycard. Put the corpse in the bin.

Go through the mesh gates to the Medical Wing. Sneak up on the doc sat in his office and snap his neck when the coast's clear. Wearing his robes, you can cross the gangplank to the 'wards' and find Smith in the third room on the left. 'Death Serum' time.

The gang members? Kill one by setting a bomb above the 'globe room'; another by pressing ⊗ next to the gas cylinder in the kitchen and the third by asphyxiating him after his weight-training in the gym. Smith's 'body' is back at the start – right next to the exit.

Alternatively: an admissions card near the smoking guy in the grounds lets you into the clinic as a guest.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Stun gun (guard room).

NO SUGGED: Smith's a little unhinged. So best not mention the Death Serum in your pocket, eh?

WORLD OF PAIN: We've missed our target. Get it right and there'll be a corpse under the wreckage.

A NEW LIFE

Pick the lock in the garage to the south, and wait in the vet's room out back to dust the dustman and grab his togs. Don't miss the tranquilizer darts here. You can now casually stroll into the backyard of the house up north, climb up into the kid's treehouse and shoot that git of a dog below you. This frees your route into Sinistra's cellar, where one of those highly-trained FBI guys will walk into your gun. Grab the lighter fluid from here.

Upstairs in the house, use the little alcove in Sinistra's office as a sniping spot, and a hiding place for the big man's body. Finally, tip the lighter fluid onto the barbecue to fry Sinistra's wife. Not for fun – she's got that necklace you need. Alternatively: Dress as the pool attendant and flirt with Sinistra's wife – she'll take you to a quiet place. 'Do' her. (No, not like *that*...)

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Air Rifle (treehouse), Hedge Cutters (hedgecutting woman), MP7 (FBI agents).

BE: Hug the wall before breaking into this room or you'll be rumbled by HedgeTrimmer Lady.

GARBAGE MAN CAN: Can wander around the neighbourhood unchallenged, that is. Waste 'em!

A DOG'S DEATH: If it wasn't for the CCTV, we'd suggest putting him down from point blank range.

POOL STUFF: We doubt the pool attendant'll be going for Sinistra's wife after this little 'accident'.

THE MURDER OF CROWS

FAIRY POPPINS: Bear in mind that cops will always chase you – never the birds. Keep out of gunfights.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER: You'll be trusted if you're in a bird costume – so long as you keep guns hidden.

Purayah's office is to the northwest. Chicken-thugs bar your entry, but 'duck' down the alley when no-one's looking and you'll find one near the bins. Suited up, use the door opposite to reach Purayah, snuff him out, and steal his walkie talkie. As for Mason, climb onto the bins in the little courtyard on the west side, and you can follow the balconies to booby-trap a suspended piano. Which Mason will obligingly stand underneath. Kulinksy, meanwhile, will be on the third floor in a NE or SE building. In both cases, find the back way in by vaulting onto scenery in the alleys nearby – that way you're not shot dead for entering the front way with the wrong costume. Clubs, eh? Alternatively, kill the suitcase-carrier in a quiet corner. With his costume and case, the office is open to you.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: MP9 (birds), SG552 (Purayah's office), SLP.40.S (Mason), Kazo TRG (Kulinsky)

TALK LIKE ME: Kulinsky might be expecting you. The radar will tell you if he's ready and waiting.

PINGING: Annoyingly, Purayah's office is visible from here – but you can't turn to face that way.

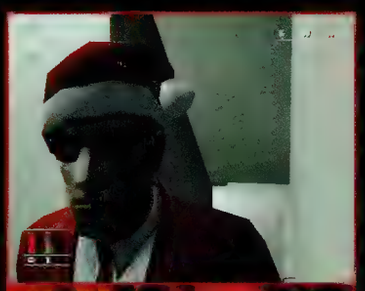
YOU BETTER WATCH OUT...

Step one: head around the corner to the security room and quietly kill the Christmas Guard while he struggles with operating a coffee machine. Lasers off, and through to the lift.

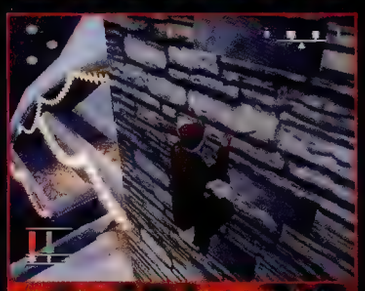
Step two: FBI outfit. On the staff floor, frazzling a fuse box outside brings an FBI fixer running – and there's a convenient body bin nearby. Now get onto the balcony overlooking the jacuzzi and climb up the brickwork on the west side. From your vantage point, shoot Bingham's jacuzzi and he's sucked into the sky.

De Hallivand is upstairs at the studio level, through a lift that's off a corridor in the main party area (guarded – hence the FBI costume). Lurk in his bedroom to the southwest and murder him bad. And his dog. Or drop his own lighting rig on him with a mine. Don't miss the tape in the office nearby. Alternatively, De Hallivand regularly stands on his balcony – you can spot and shoot him from where you offed Bingham.

[illegible]VE BEEN HAD: Peek through the keyhole to be sure the guard's engrossed in coffee orderage.



[illegible]'S THE SPIRIT: Everywhere except the studio is yours to explore once you're in the festive spirit.



WELL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL: The jacuzzi kill is the game's most satisying bit. This is the dull part.

THE FRAME: While De Hallivand is busy ogling ladyflesh through his lens, you can squash his head.

DEATH ON THE MISSISSIPI

LO SAILOR: Handily, earmuff-wearing engineers are deaf to gunshots and panicked yells. Go nuts.

AD HA[illegible]: Gator Gang 2 stands facing the window, just begging you to make his back bleed.

Sailor's outfit? Aye, cap'n. Grab one from a seaman who strolls up on the left and tip his body into the drink. Then crack the lock on the engine room door beneath the gantries. Gator Gang 1's here: wait until he's daydreaming near a giant piston, and brain him with a shovel.

Up on the third deck corridor, wait for Gator Gang 2's girlfriend to leave his room, wedge the door open to stop it locking, then murder. Run to get some sea air at the south end of fourth deck. Gator Gang 3's walking the stern.

Wait by the stairs up to fifth, and a Purser will eventually appear. Do what you must. The three Gator Gang members upstairs, as well as Muldoon himself, are a formality. And don't miss the pictures in the safe in Muldoon's bedroom, northwest. Alternatively, poison the cake in the kitchen on the fourth deck.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Bullnose (sailors), Bull.480 (Gator Gang).

[illegible]NG POINT: Careful about shoving bodies over railings – they can flop down to the decks below.

[illegible]RIZE PURSER: Fast kills are crucial here, as a single shotgun shell to your stomach can finish you off.

TIL DEATH DO US PART

Too much pop has left one guest tottering around the lawn – he's got the costume and the invite you need to crash the party, so deal with him quietly (he'll stagger into the dark 'shed' southwest), then make for the house.

Inside, there are plenty of nooks and crannies available for swapping clothes with shotgun-toting hicks. Try the stairs up to the attic – there's one guard on duty nearby who's ripe for a nudifying. With that done, you're 'safe'. Enter the attic itself and grasp for the walls on the right until you find a mine spot.

As for the bride's dad, he'll visit a grave off to the west of the grounds – brain him and knock his corpse into one of the open graves for a nice, subtle kill. By the way, you can join in the fistfight on the lawn – they'll clap along, bless 'em. Alternatively, grab the gift at the other end of the jetty, slip a mine in it and blow everyone up.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Six shooter, shotgun.

[illegible]FFRUGHT PRINCE: Unless you get bomb-happy, the drunken guest is your only way into the party.

[illegible]AMING HELL: And this is how things go should you decide bomb-happiness is your thing.

[illegible]IANO FORTE: More like twenty guests, actually. But they're about to get a shock all the same.

[illegible]RAVE SITUATION: Stand over an open grave, suffer the consequences. This wedding's *really* ruined.

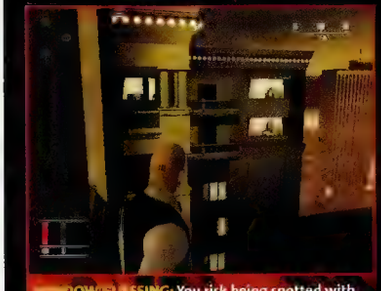
A HOUSE OF CARDS

[illegible]S NO ROYALE: No, you shouldn't run away from the casino. We've just done it for the fancy pic.

[illegible]THERE, DONE THAT: Only the waiter wanders in and out of this area, so relax and enjoy the killing.

Check in at the desk to the east – you get a keycard to room 701, giving you access to floor seven. Now go into the men's toilets and off the German when he goes for a tinkle. Pick the lock in the toilets when the coast is clear. In the corridor beyond, a waiter will sporadically appear. Laundry-basket his body. Do this all quickly, as you'll need to enter the lounge area to the northeast of the casino – and stay there. The sheikh will drop by: you can off him with a suitcase bomb or find the mobile phone in the scientist's room (see below) and call him – he'll step out back for an easy kill.

Now for the chap on floor eight. Head up to your room, then climb over the balcony and shimmy along until you're able to climb up a vine-covered wall to the top floor. You can then creep your way into the window of your hit, deal with him, grab the case, and leg it. Alternatively: there are cases in the lobby you can booby-trap.



[illegible]NDOW GUESSING: You risk being spotted with every window you sidle past. The map's your mate.

[illegible]STS OF FU[illegible]: Agent 47's fists aren't of the deadly variety – use poison or pistols to guarantee the kill.

A DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

Security? Not when you can chat to a guard, follow him and leave his corpse in the room out back. His togs gets you into the garage and a trailer to the east with a Heaven Guest outfit inside. Leave the Silverballers here and take the right elevator east. If you're quick enough, Martinez will be in a toilet north – an easy kill with the poison syringe. Suit up, and access the computer southeast. New target: Eve, the singer. Chat to her and she'll lure you back to the office. Get in, punch her face off, then steal her Stilletto and finish her.

Now take the other lift to the basement party. Find Ketlyn – the wandering red blob – for a repeat of the flirty games with Eve. Then comply with Maynard John's request to meet him at the Torture Chamber. Killing him's easy: tool up with the MP7s, duck behind the screens, and pop out when he pauses to reload.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: Meat cleaver (party kitchen), Stiletto (Eve), FN-2000 (Martinez), Cane Sword (Ketlyn).

ADVICE: Maynard John drops to the floor at one point – keep firing, or he'll clamber to his feet and gun you dead.

EVE-IL: Plenty of time for this hit – Eve will stroll right over to the 'throne' before turning on you.

AMENDMENT XXV

A tourist stops behind the bus for a smoke – pop the Silverballers in her case. Stroll through security into the toilets at the back, where an attendant has a costume. This lets you into the security room, where your guns – and a keycard – await. *Keep that case with you from now on.* Defrock the guard in the courtyard to the north. Follow the map to the Main Building, and follow the Vice Prez until he's walking the dog. Slow him up by hovering nearby and the FBI chap makes himself scarce – shift the balance of power.

Climb the vines nearby, and pop a mine in that suitcase and leave it near the top. You'll see why later. Across the roof, an FBI suit will emerge from the West Wing. Kill, suit up, hide body. Follow the cubicle maze to Parchezzi III, who'll run. You're supposed to gun him down, but remember that bomb? Run back along the corridor to the north-east, onto the lawn. Detonate.

BEST NEW WEAPONS: M14 (security office).

TOILE-LOG: Be *very* careful stepping out of the toilets – nearby guards may spot the corpse and 'have a word'.

SUIT PALATE: You'll blend right in with the FBI suit. Although the Vice President's pesky dog might sniff you out.

REQUIEM

Yes, you *can* play the funeral – wiggle the left stick until Agent 47 clambers to his feet. This is a simple shootout: best thing is to tear through the FBI agents ahead and hide behind the banked walls to the right, then wait for the enemies to come to you. Outside, wheelchair guy and priest-banging-at-the-gates are your final targets.

SAVING A BALLER: Reload as soon as you're safe behind the wall – it'll take a while for the suits to scamper around the corner, at which point you should be ready to empty bullets into their faces. The first-person view gives you the edge here.

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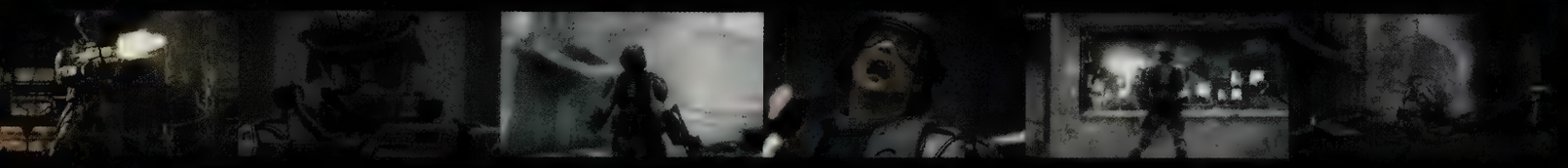

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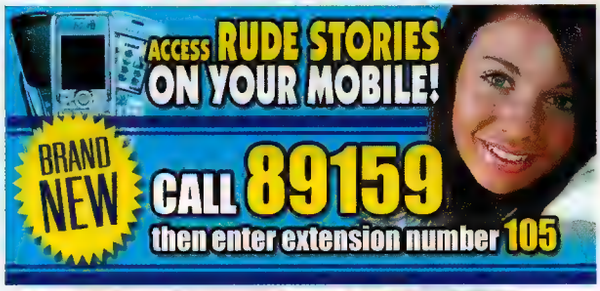

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HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL E3 CONFERENCE

Oi, mister Sony! We're not saying your E3 conference 2006 was 'disappointing' but if we see one more rubber duck... Here's a list of dos and don'ts for next time.

DON'T...

■ Don't cobble together a video of embarrassing voxpops from urban youths saying how much they like PlayStation. "I love the way the controller feels – the hard plastic and the little nobbly bits." explains one hooting American. "I heard dat the graphics on it was like crazy!" says another. Who do you think you are? Microsoft? No. No. No.

■ Don't get a developer to demo his game unless he actually knows how to play it. The sight of the *Genji 2* head honcho struggling to kill a giant crab *in his own game* brought the conference to a standstill.

■ Don't show a load of confusing, obscure, half-finished games like wildlife 'simulator' *Afrika*, alongside a three-second trailer for the new *Need For Speed*. Three seconds! There are loads of brilliant PS3 games out there. Show those instead. Your selection makes it look like everything's half-finished and there are no fully-featured games running on genuine PS3 hardware.

■ Don't make duck jokes. We're looking at you, Phil Harrison. This time a fire-breathing duck joke was part of a baffling EyeToy card recognition game. "Now that's what I call a duck!" Er, *what?* Didn't you mean to say, "Now that's what I call crispy duck!" or something? We'll never know but your embarrassment is now frozen in time forever.

■ Don't say things like "We're using technology to make *magic!*"... before showing us *Genji 2*. Paul Daniels pulling flowers out of his sleeves is magic. David Copperfield making his testicles disappear is magic. This is just a depressingly dull-looking action game that actually looks worse than your own *God of War 2* on PS2.

■ Don't get the generic EA bloke in to smooch your ass *every single year*...

DO...

■ Pick a selection of your best games and show them off in detail. Where was *Army Of Two?* What about *Haze*? How about giving *Assassin's Creed* five minutes of stage time instead?

■ Let Hideo Kojima show the *Metal Gear Solid 4* trailer in its entirety rather than a measly three-minute edit. The full trailer is the most exciting thing in the world, but noooo – you had to spend fifteen minutes struggling with *Genji 2* and showing rhinos wandering around a plain.

■ Announce *Grand Theft Auto 4*. Why in the blue hell didn't you say anything about it, Sony? Because of this, the announcement at the Xbox conference made people think that the next *GTA* game was Microsoft exclusive, when it's coming to PS3 at exactly the same time. PlayStation and *Grand Theft Auto* go hand-in-hand. They're *made* for each other.

■ Have you thought about getting Paul Danan in? We've heard he's free.

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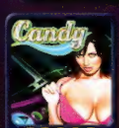

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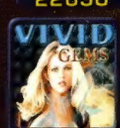

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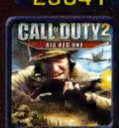

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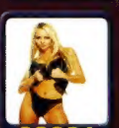
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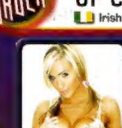
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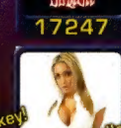

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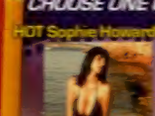

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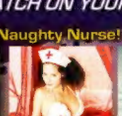

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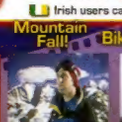

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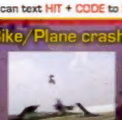

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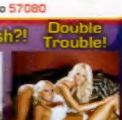

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